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SEPTEMBER '93

**TIM "HERB"
ALEXANDER
OF PRIMUS**

**BRUSH MASTER
CLAYTON CAMERON**

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COUNTRY'S FINEST**

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Contents

FEATURES



TIM "HERB" ALEXANDER

With their new album, *Pork Soda*, Primus has carved out a stylized and twisted place on the pop music landscape. And in the drum world, Tim Alexander's playing has declared its arrival in an equally against-the-grain fashion.

• Matt Peiken

20

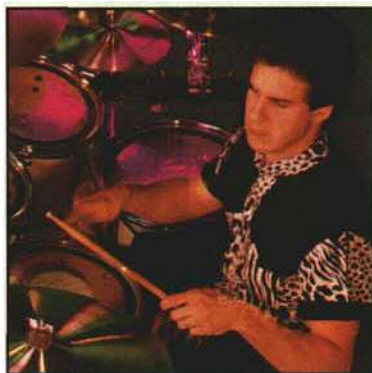


CLAYTON CAMERON

The art of brush playing got a well-needed shot in the arm when Clayton Cameron got a hold of it. Now, after several years with Sammy Davis, Jr. and a highly regarded video on the subject, Cameron has taken his magic to Tony Bennett's drum chair. Oh, and he plays sticks, too.

• William F. Miller

26



TOURING COUNTRY DRUMMERS

Touring with country music's big stars is a different ball of wax from making the records. Get the lowdown on the country high road from Garth Brooks's Mike Palmer, Ricky Skaggs' Keith Edwards, Vince Gill's Martin Parker, and Billy Ray Cyrus's Gregg Fletcher.

• Robyn Flans

30

COLUMNS

EDUCATION

- 60** **BASICS**
Miking Your Drums
BY JOHN POKRANDT
- 77** **STRICTLY
TECHNIQUE**
Grouping
Control Studies
BY RON SPAGNARDI
- 78** **CONCEPTS**
Faking It
BY GARY GRISWOLD
- 86** **Rock'N'
JAZZ CLINIC**
Your Left Foot
BY WILLIAM F. MILLER
- 102** **ROCK CHARTS**
Lars Ulrich: "Nothing
Else Matters"
TRANSCRIBED BY
DARREN HAITMANEK
- 107** **LATIN
SYMPOSIUM**
Calypso Grooves
BY CHUCK SILVERMAN
- 113** **OFF THE
RECORD**
Nick Menza:
Countdown
To Extinction

PROFILES

- 40** **PORTRAITS**
Hugo Pinksterboer
BY ADAM BUDOFISKY
- 82** **A DIFFERENT
VIEW**
Mike Mainieri
BY KEN MICALLEF

NEWS

- 8** **UPDATE**
Fred Young,
Prince's Michael B.,
John Tempesta of
Exodus, and the
Sundogs' Jimmy
Hobson, plus News
- 114** **INDUSTRY
HAPPENINGS**

DEPARTMENTS

- 4** **EDITOR'S
OVERVIEW**
- 6** **READERS'
PLATFORM**
- 12** **ASK A PRO**
- 16** **IT'S
QUESTIONABLE**
- 104** **CRITIQUE**
- 115** **DRUM MARKET**
- 118** **DRUMKIT OF
THE MONTH**

EQUIPMENT



- 34** **ELECTRONIC
REVIEW**
New KAT Products
BY ED URIBE
- 38** **NEW AND
NOTABLE**
- 108** **SHOP TALK**
Drumshells:
Where It All Starts
BY WOODY THOMPSON
- Understanding
Drumshells
BY BILL DETAMORE
- Finding The Timbre
BY JOHN GOOD

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



MD On The Stands



Some months back, we ran a brief announcement to point out the huge expansion of *MD's* worldwide newsstand distribution. Our growth in this area is a direct result of our recent affiliation with the Curtis Circulation Company, the nation's leading national distributor of newsstand publications.

For those unfamiliar with the workings of the newsstand distribution system, allow me to briefly explain: Most (if not all) major consumer magazines do not move directly from the publication's printer to your local corner newsstand. Rather, publishers utilize the services of large national distributors, like Curtis, who in turn deal with hundreds of *local* magazine wholesalers in various regions of the country. It then becomes the responsibility of the wholesalers to distribute the magazines to the hundreds of newsstand outlets within their jurisdictions, where they're made available for consumer purchase. It's an incredibly complicated, labor-intensive system, but it's been in operation a lot longer than *Modern Drummer*, and it continues to work efficiently for thousands of magazine titles month after month.

Many magazines are also sold through huge retail chain-store operations, and Curtis has seen to it that *MD* is available in a growing number of these chains. So you're now likely to find *MD* in many major supermarket chains, convenience stores, college bookstores, pharmacies, and discount variety stores. Obviously, most of these chain operations have an astounding number of retail outlets, and I'm proud to say that *Modern Drummer* can be found in nearly 40,000 of them across the U.S. and Canada.

Along with wide national distribution, Curtis also offers one of the largest *international* newsstand departments in the world. So we'll now enjoy an even *greater* presence in ever-increasing numbers throughout Europe, South America, and Australia, and in nearly eighty other countries.

Despite all of this wide visibility, if for some reason you simply cannot locate a copy of the magazine on a newsstand in your area, please don't hesitate to write and let me know about it. With the help of the fine Curtis distribution team, I'll do my very best to see to it that *MD* gets out to your neck of the woods as soon as possible.

MODERN DRUMMER

EDITOR/PUBLISHER	Ronald Spagnardi
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER	Isabel Spagnardi
MANAGING EDITOR	Rick Van Horn
FEATURES EDITOR	William F. Miller
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Adam J. Budofsky
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT	Justin J. Cordes
ART DIRECTOR	Scott G. Bienstock
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Robyn Flans, Simon Goodwin, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Matt Peiken, Teri Saccone, Robert Santelli.

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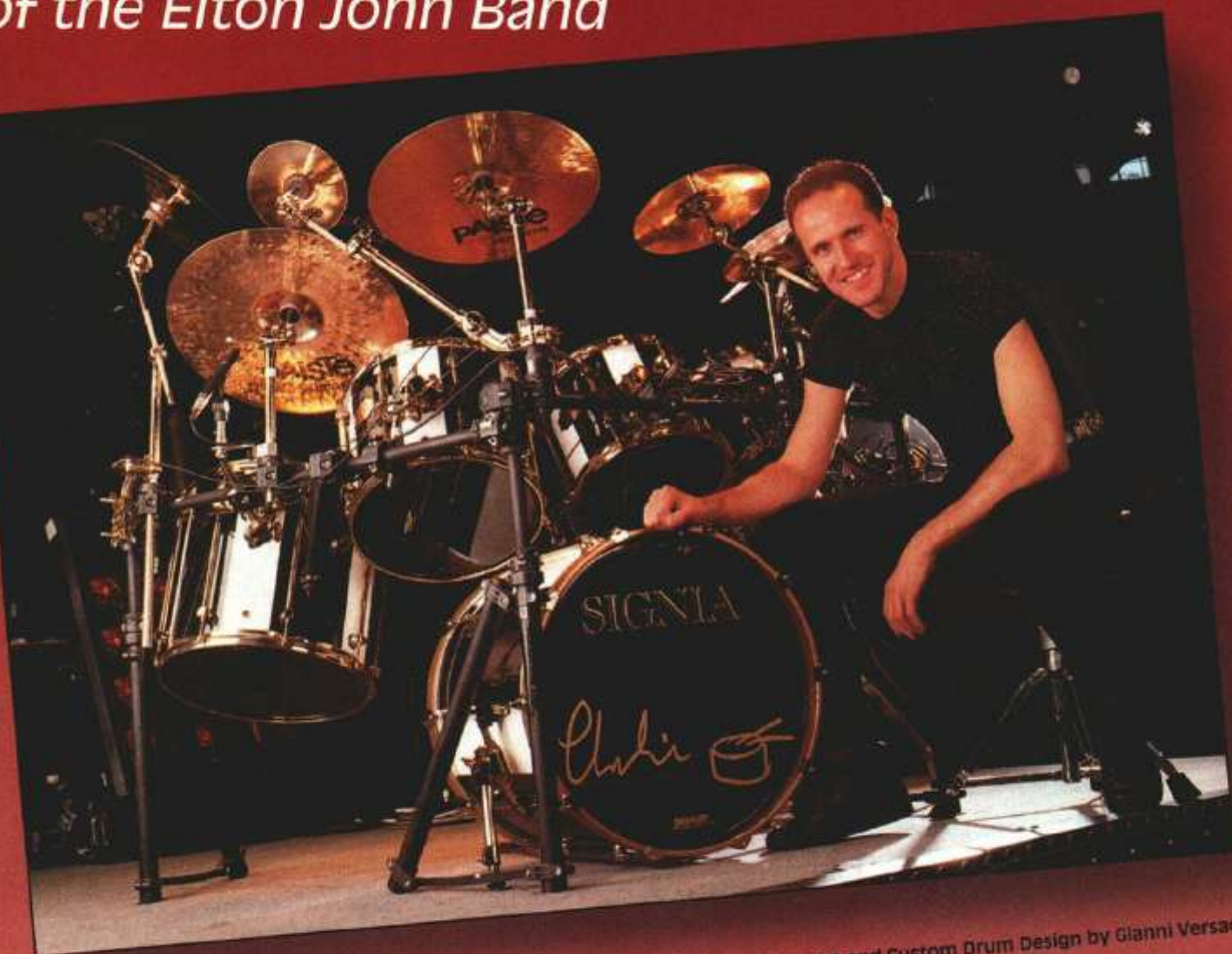
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Profile: Charlie Morgan

of the Elton John Band



PERSONAL DATA:

Charlie Morgan

BORN: Hammersmith, London, England.

CURRENT PROJECTS:

- Currently on a sold-out World Tour with the Elton John Band.
- Just completed new album with EMI artist Tasmin Archer
- Video for Kate Bush's "Rocket Man" cover on the "Two Rooms" Album.

Concept and Custom Drum Design by Gianni Versace

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SEXISM IN MD?

Editor's note: Never in MD's history has any reader correspondence generated as much immediate response as did Jennifer Schwartz's letter in the June '93 issue. Ms. Schwartz wrote to inform us that she was discontinuing her subscription, because she felt MD was a sexist publication. She based this assertion on what she perceived to be a lack of coverage of women drummers, and the inclusion of male-oriented advertising. We responded with statistics on the participation of women in drumming, an explanation of our criteria for coverage in MD, a brief discussion of our advertising policy, and an index of the women drummers MD has covered over the years.

Following are excerpts from the many letters we received from readers offering their thoughts on this important matter.

"Sexist" is not a word I would use to describe *Modern Drummer*. The words "informative" and "educational" come to mind. I purchased my first new drumkit based on a review in *MD*. I've bought music books and instructional videos after reading about them in *MD*. And if my boss knew how often I use the office copier to copy *Latin Symposium* and *Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic* exercises, he'd probably fire me. I'm all for equality, but to reject a perfectly good magazine based solely upon the fact that men are predominantly featured in the articles seems self-defeating.

Audra Supplee
West Chester PA

With regard to Jennifer Schwartz's diatribe on the plight of female drummers, I disagree. I find your magazine very informative and helpful. Who cares if it's men or women talking? We're talking about music, not sex.

The reality is that most drummers are male. However, to carry a chip on your

shoulder and lambaste the only drum magazine around does nothing to promote women in drumming. Why not applaud the articles they *do* have on women? I say get a life and quit making this a "women's issue" and being so polarized. It's about drumming, music, and freedom of expression—not women's rights. As more women enter into music, the tide will change and the manufacturers and media will follow.

Patrice Stanton
Fresno CA

I've gotten *MD* since 1988, and I completely disagree with Ms. Schwartz's charges. I have always found the contributing writers very consistent in referring to a non-specific drummer as "he/she." Also, when a lady drummer is profiled, it is usually done with a refreshing lack of the "Ain't she pretty? And she plays!" mentality found in too many other "male-dominated" magazines.

Including articles on just any female drummer to even out the ratio would be tokenism, and *that* is sexist. The rarity of women who have earned the success necessary to rate an article stands as testimony to their strength and perseverance.

Lara Hoffman
Cincinnati OH

I congratulate Ms. Schwartz in presenting an issue that must begin to be recognized. As a professional drummer and percussionist, I have faced many facets of sexual discrimination within the industry. I feel that *MD* helps to perpetuate these misleading sexual stereotypes. I was appalled that *MD* could find nothing more reasonable to say than a page-long response attempting to discredit Ms. Schwartz. Instead of being sympathetic and receptive to her statement, you responded using sarcasm and harshness. Hardly professional.

I feel effort has not been made to pre-

sent a less sexually biased magazine. There are a multitude of female drummers and percussionists that I have come across, and I hope that *MD* will make a more significant attempt to open its eyes and ears in order to help women achieve greater status in the drumming community—since you claim to be aware of this predicament in your response. Your list of women drummers who have appeared in *MD* is appreciated, but disgustingly small. I am hopeful that in future issues you will attempt to prove my statements inaccurate—and not by mere words, but by actions.

Melissa Lovaglio-Emry
Seaford NY

Kudos to you for giving that sanctimonious female drummer the old one-two. I, too, am a female drummer who fully recognizes that I am in the minority—and so what? Why beat up *MD* for my own gender's lack of interest/pursuit in the percussion field?

Ms. Schwartz: Lighten up, live your life, and play your music. Your hysterical outburst only serves to perpetuate myths that we women are on a hormonal rollercoaster, and don't deserve serious consideration in *any* area, on *any* level.

Susan Georgion
St. Augustine FL

Jennifer: If there were an equal number of female and male drummers, I have no doubt that *MD* would devote an equal amount of coverage to them. It's not the fault of the magazine that there are so few female drummers. And there is no reason that male drummers cannot be "role models" for aspiring players of either sex. My teacher, who happens to be male, is an extremely effective and supportive instructor. To blindly eliminate male drummers as your role models makes *you* sexist. Make it your mission to be the best *drummer*, not the *bestfemale*

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Fred Young

Not many bands can survive the loss of their lead singer, but when both Ricky Lee Phelps and his bass-player brother Doug abruptly left the Kentucky HeadHunters last summer to pursue their own careers, it only took a day to replace them. "We wanted to keep playing," drummer Fred Young says, "so we called Anthony Kenney, who had played bass with us in '68 in a band we used to have called Itchy Brother. Then we called Mark Orr, who had sung with us in '81. They were glad to get back with us, and it's like old times again."

The new version of the band only had nine days to prepare for a tour with Hank Williams, Jr. that had already been booked, but they pulled it off with typical HeadHunter gusto. "After people saw us, they said we had more of a southern rock bite than just the country sound," Fred says. "But our country fans are still behind us too."

The new sound is obvious on the group's recent album, *Rave On!!*, recorded last November after the group came off the road. And another side of the HeadHunters has been exposed on Johnnie Johnson's new album, *That'll Work*. The former Chuck Berry pianist met the HeadHunters at a Grammy



Awards party in New York in '91, and soon after came down to their rehearsal house in south-central Kentucky to jam with them. "He was ready to join the band," Fred laughs. "We went into the studio with him just a couple of weeks after we did our album. His album shows our deeper blues and jazz influences—stuff you wouldn't dream of the HeadHunters playing. I used brushes on a lot of the stuff."

If Fred sounds a bit more modern on these two albums, it might be because he updated his drumkit about twenty years. "On our record," he says, "I used a red-sparkle Ludwig set from 1966, and for Johnnie's album, I used a Mod-orange Ludwig kit from the early '70s."

But Fred hasn't abandoned his collection of vintage parade drums, which he continues to use on the road. He and that kit appear in a ten-minute segment of *Rebeats No. 2* Video Drum Magazine in which Fred discusses his unique setup. The video is available at select music shops, or from Rebeats Vintage Drum Products, a division of Cook's Music, in Alma, Michigan.

• **Rick Mattingly**

Michael B.

Anyone fortunate enough to have seen Prince live recently can attest to the sublime drumming of Michael B. (a.k.a. Michael Bland), Prince's skinsman for the last three years. Besides his work on the last three studio releases (*Graffiti Bridge*, *Diamonds And Pearls*, and the "symbol" album), Michael contributes an enormous musical range to Prince's band that no previous drummer has provided. He's not only the funkier drummer to grace this illustrious outfit, he's also the most hard-rocking.

This spring's short but sweet theater tour gave American fans their first glimpse of the Minnesota native. (Michael had previously done the Europe-only 1990

Nude tour.) "This tour has been strictly about the music," offers the young drummer. "The European tour that follows is the usual thrills 'n' spills show, but the U.S. tour has been about getting the music across. Most of the show was material from the most recent effort, and we didn't delve as much into the earlier stuff. The most recent album wasn't necessarily aimed at being a huge hit. We did it more from a need to get back to doing music for its own sake. The tour was similar in that respect."

In addition to Prince, Michael has recorded with R&B vocalist Howard Hewitt (ex-Shalamar) and jazz guitarist Phil Upchurch. He is certainly content

with Prince's gig, although it requires a total commitment from him. "I'd like to remain with this as long as I can," he says. "After three years, I'm still being challenged and I'm still seeking out new musical directions. I'm also concentrating on songwriting on a personal level. Working with Prince, I get a lot of insight into composition and arrangement, so I never tire of it. I'm in the studio with him as often as I can be. I'm honing my skills so that I can become more involved musically. I'm a drummer, but I also have perfect pitch and I play a few other instruments. Working with the bravest composer of our time is such an inspiration."

• **Teri Saccone**

John Tempesta

John Tempesta became a permanent member of San Francisco thrash band Testament earlier this year after leaving another Bay-area thrash outfit, Exodus. Soon after his exodus from Exodus, the band disintegrated. John says the move was not premeditated on his part. "I was first offered the Testament gig while I was out on the road with Exodus," he explains. "I hadn't planned to leave Exodus for Testament, I was just going to be filling in on a tour. When they were looking for a replacement, they weren't just looking for a drummer, they were looking for someone who could fit in personality-wise. I knew them from way back when I was a tech for Anthrax and from

living in San Francisco. They came to see me play live, and in the end, they didn't hold any auditions—they pretty much wanted me."

Testament recently released a six-song EP, *Return To The Apocalyptic City*, but don't look for the blistering drumming of Tempesta on that. John explains: "After their drummer [Louie Clemente] had split, John Bostaph [now with Slayer] came in and did the tour, which four of the six cuts on the EP are taken from. It was during that tour that I saw them play while I was considering the offer. I liked it."

How does John assess his participation with Testament? "I think that I add a lit-

tle more spice and groove to it," he answers. "It's different from Exodus because it's a little more melodic and we do ballads, which I wasn't used to playing. Also, I love to tour, and with Testament there's much more of an opportunity for that. I want to go out and tour as much as I can, and we have sixty dates in a row on this tour!"

Testament will follow their American tour with extensive tours to Europe and Japan, and then record the follow-up to 1992's studio album, *The Ritual*. The new album should appear some time in early 1994.

• **Teri Saccone**

Jimmy Hobson

Bohemian, native Californian, and GMS endorser Jimmy Hobson personifies the phrase "variety is the spice of life." These days Hobson is laying it down for a newly signed Cajun band called the Sundogs, who will be heading out for a national tour this summer. How did he prepare for playing in a Cajun band? "One of my favorite records is Dr. John's *The Night Tripper*," he says, "but to tell you the truth, I had to ask today what 'second-line' meant. I don't really know much about the music at all, but I'm learning by listening to the Neville Brothers [who the Sundogs opened for last summer] and Professor Longhair.

"I think my jazz influence and ears are leading me in the right direction, though," continues Hobson, who is totally self-taught. "I was much more influenced by who my father listened to—Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Thelonious Monk—and especially Art Blakey."

Hobson has logged in hours of experience in various situations. In the early 1970s he landed the drummer's seat in the European touring company of the musical *Hair*. "I came back after that

year," he recalls, "and I realized that this was my career at that point, so I taught myself to read." This helped Jimmy to prepare for his extensive work in L.A. and the Bay Area in various studio and television situations, such as his long stint with the Limelitters—backing the likes of the Kingston Trio and Judy Collins—and with the group Master Chorale.

More recently Hobson has recorded in New York with pop artists Kathy Troccoli and Celine Dion. "For Dion, I played on two of the hip-hop tracks, which, for the most part, is a three against four groove." And Hobson should know: His self-published book *Polymotion* specifically covers the topic. "*Polymotion* is about overlaying time signatures—basically phrasing in threes while playing in 4/4. You'll find that Weckl, Gadd, Garibaldi—or any of the great James Brown drummers—are always playing something phrased off of a dotted note. It's that sort of overlaying of time signatures that creates a flow in music—a circular kind of thing."

• **Georgia Antonopoulos**

News...

Bill Berg can be heard on the Wayne Johnson Trio album, *Keeping The Dream Alive*. He also worked on Leo Kottke's recent LP. And for those who didn't know, Bill is the creative force behind Disney's animated beast in *Beauty And The Beast*, and he supervised the animation of the Aladdin character in that film as well.

Paul Angers has been

doing a lot of film work lately: He recorded tracks and played on-camera in the film *Chaplin*, he can be seen on-camera in *Hocus Pocus* and *The Tina Turner Story*, and he is on the soundtrack to *Born Yesterday*.

Gregg Bissonette can be heard on Steve Bailey's recent release (his father, Bud Bissonette, also played on it),

as well as on releases by Joe Satriani, Robin Zander, and Circus Of Power.

Doane Perry is currently out with Jethro Tull, supporting their 25th Anniversary boxed set. He can also be heard on a forthcoming Dweezil Zappa release, Magellan's new album, and Adrian Gurvitz's recent LP.

Alvino Bennett recently

enjoyed doing a gig with Supertramp, as well as Brenda Russell's latest video.

Brian McLeod on *14 Songs*, Paul Westerberg's first solo album on Reprise/Sire Records.

Lancelot Hall on Inner Circle's *Bad Boys*.

Russ Kunkel on David Crosby's recently released *Thousand Roads*.

continued on page 101

WE FOUND A WAY TO MAKE SOUND LIKE THE A



Monster backbeats. Breakneck tempos.

Single strokes from hell. Close your eyes, and you'd swear there were two drummers up there, but it's just Dennis Chambers being, well, himself. Given his extraordinary abilities, it would be almost impossible to make

Dennis sound ordinary. However, two possibilities come to mind. The first is to break his arm (just kidding, Dennis). The second is to take away his new K. Zildjian Dark Crash Thin and Medium Thin cymbals. You see, the new K Dark Crashes are an inte-

TAKE DENNIS CHAMBERS AVERAGE DRUMMER.

gral part of Dennis' set-up, because they give

him a whole new range of sounds.

"I've been playing Zildjians all my life,"

notes Dennis, "and the reason

I like the K's is their real dark, warm

sound." Why do the new K

Dark Crashes offer so many sonic

possibilities? Well, they're

now available in a couple of different

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offers a warm, shimmering dark crash that is

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Thin is a slightly heavier dark crash cymbal.

It offers more high-end response in the

initial attack, yet is still very full-bodied, with

warm, low-pitched overtones. In 16", 17", 18", and

19" sizes. These new cymbals com-

bine the input of top players like Dennis,

Peter Erskine, Dave Weckl

and Marvin "Smitty" Smith, with

the painstaking handcrafts-

manship that has made the K's, quite

simply, the finest cymbals

money can buy. The result, to quote

Dennis, is "a sound that's hard to

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OK, Dennis. You can take the cast off now.



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Dave Abbruzzese

Q I love where you place your cymbal crashes and accents, and all of your fills. I'd like to know (if you remember) what your cymbal setup was when you played on *Saturday Night Live* in late 1992. I'd also like to ask why you choose Sabian cymbals over other brands. Are there specific reasons?

Pete Allen
Liberty Corner NJ

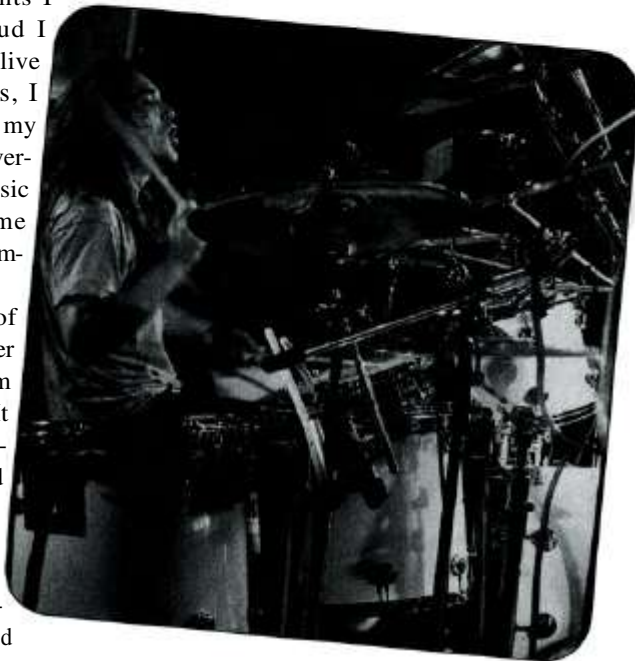
A Thanks for the kind words, Pete. Here come your answers: When we did the *SNL* thing, I was basically using the same setup as my live one, except that I used AA splashes instead of my usual AAX splashes. Otherwise, the list is: 18" and 19" AAX *Metal* crashes, a 17" AA medium crash, a 20" AAX *Metal* ride, a 20" AA China, two 8" AA splashes, and 14" *Fusion* bottom/AAX *Stage* top hi-hats.

Why do I choose Sabian? Well, I used many different kinds of cymbals when I

was younger. When it came time to replace a broken cymbal, I grabbed what I could afford. I never really worried about tones, because back then all I wanted was to see how many comments I could get about how loud I played. Later on, during live and recording situations, I realized how important my cymbal tones were to the overall sound of any style of music I was playing. So I became kind of picky about my cymbals.

In those days/years of searching, I don't recall ever hearing a "bad" sound from any company's cymbals. It came down to what I needed out of my cymbals, and that's what brought me to Sabian. I needed a durable cymbal with predictable sound that was both pleasing and full to my ear and

my mic's. If you dig your stuff—no matter what the brand—then you've got the best you can have, and that's all that matters.



Troy Luccketta

Q Your drumming has influenced me since the very first time I heard Tesla. Last year I had the chance to see you live three times, and your powerful playing style blew me away. While you used your ride cymbal, I noticed that you kept straight 8th notes with your hi-hat. How did you develop this without interrupting your hand/foot coordination? Also, your drum solo had a Latin feel that sounded great. What exercises did you use in developing this? Finally, I am interested in knowing if you have any plans to do drum clinics in the future.

Gregg Scholtz
Saginaw MI

A Thank you for the kind words. I wish I could tell you about all the wonderful independence exercises I worked with, but the fact is that I developed this technique at a very early age. But I can make a few suggestions that I hope will help. Try playing some real straight time on your set. For example, play an 8th-note ride pattern with your right hand, snare on 2 and 4 with your left, and the bass drum on 1 and 3. Now play the hi-hat on the quarter-note beat, then take it a step further and play it on the "and" of the quarter-note beat. When this becomes comfortable, work on playing straight 8th notes with the hi-hat. This should give you some freedom between your



hands and feet.

I don't claim to be expert in the field of Latin drumming, but I do love playing it. The beginning for me was Steve Gadd's *Up Close* video. In it, Steve demonstrates "Late In The Evening," which was a song recorded by Paul Simon. But there are also some great Latin books and videos out there, so you might want to call some stores in your area.

I don't have any plans to do clinics at the moment. With my touring schedule, I figured I would wait until I had a little more time. But I would like to do some, so perhaps at a later date...? I'm also in the process of establishing a drum school in the San Francisco Bay Area along with some other top players. Watch for news about that in upcoming issues of *MD*.



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C O B R A



SONOR PERFORMER INFO

Q I recently purchased a used set of Sonor *Performer* series drums. I realize this series has been discontinued, but I'm impressed with the quality of this "entry level" kit, and I'd like to know more about it. When were the drums offered? What is the shell construction, and how does it compare to Sonor's current lineup? What type of heads would Sonor have recommended as "standard equipment"? And finally, any thoughts on re-covering? I'm wondering if it will be impossible to remove the old covering because of the way Sonor covered the shells.

Paul Koch
Louisville KY

A Sonor product manager Buzz King replies: "Thanks for your interest in Sonor drums. You're correct about the high quality of the *Performer* series; many professional players have commented on the superior sound quality of this 'entry level' series, as well as on the durability of the hardware. The series was offered in the U.S. from 1985 through 1990. Additional sub-series were added along the way, such as the *Performer Plus* and *Panther* series. All of these drums originally had approximately the same shell construction: six-ply beechwood for the toms and 9-ply beechwood for the bass drum. The *Performer Plus* series had an additional ply of birch as an outer smooth ply for lacquering; the other series were covered.

"Sonor has used beechwood for many percussion instruments in their product mix for decades. The wood is indigenous to Germany and much of Europe, and therefore is very plentiful. It is extremely dense, and thus easy to use in that it doesn't splinter or compress easily. Sonor used this same wood for the construction of their *Phonic*, *Phonic Plus*, and *Signature* series.

"The recommended heads for this series are Sonor medium clears—top and bottom. Optimum head selection, howev-

er, is always a matter of personal preference.

"In regard to re-covering, while it is possible to remove the covering of *Performer* drums, the factory process for applying the original covering is unique, and allows the exterior laminant to bind more efficiently than any process I've seen. I'm sure that some of the shell would pull off with the finish. Therefore, I would advise against removing the covering."

CRAMPING PROBLEMS

Q I've been having a problem with my arms and wrists cramping every time I play. My band recently performed a gig, and before we were done with the first song my arms and wrists were incredibly tense and stiff. This had never happened to me before, but it now gets to the point where I have a hard time gripping my sticks. I play heavy metal, and I admit that the style I have to play can get pretty intense. But it's very frustrating when, on the first number, I have to concentrate on keeping my sticks instead of on what I'm playing. Is there anything I can do to prevent this problem? Could this be a result of my cracking my knuckles?

Tony Parandi
Croswell MI

A Cramping and stiffness generally result from the muscles not being warmed up sufficiently prior to playing. As with any form of exercise—and heavy metal drumming certainly qualifies—a regimen of gentle stretching and calisthenics to warm up the muscles and promote circulation (and thus the supply of oxygen) should be performed before you launch into the intense stuff on stage.

You might also consider your drumstick. Metal playing usually calls for a large, heavy stick. Unfortunately, the heavier the stick, the more the muscles have to work to move it. On the other hand, the smaller in diameter a stick, the harder one might have to grip in order to

hold on to it. The ideal stick for you would be one that is large enough to grip comfortably, but not so long and heavy as to place an undue strain on your hands and arms. Consider the sticks you're using now with these things in mind, and then consult your local dealer's drumstick stock to see if another model might offer a better compromise.

"Cracking one's knuckles" is not likely to promote cramping or stiffness in the muscles. Some orthopedists do think, however, that the habit can promote the onset of arthritis or bursitis in the joints of the hands. Again, a bit of stretching of the muscles in the fingers is good, but pulling or "popping" the joints of the fingers shouldn't be necessary.

WOOD SUPPLY SOURCES

Q I'm interested in hand-crafting a set of drums for myself. Can you tell me where I could locate thin sheets of maple wood?

Dale Berry
Neotsu OR

A While we cannot give you specific sources, we can tell you who to contact and what to ask for. You need to check your local Yellow Pages for industrial lumber sources, and ask them for maple "veneer." This is the term for extremely thin sheets of wood. Maple veneer isn't something your neighborhood builder's supply store is going to stock, hence the need to look for an industrial source.

It may, however, be a good idea to start with other wood types that are more readily available—and much less expensive—in order to "try your hand" at making drums. Most local supply stores or lumber yards will stock sheets of luan—a version of mahogany. This is a good wood to try working with before you go on to maple.

ELECTRONIC VERSUS ACOUSTIC PEDALS

Q I'd like some help on improving my pedal technique. I'm an electronic drummer, and I trigger my kick

continued on page 59

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TIM "HERB" ALEXANDER

O f P r i m u s

Tim Alexander, much like he is when behind a drumkit, is on a mission. Driving downtown from his house nestled deep in the Berkeley hills, there's one thing on his mind. "This place has the best food," he says as we enter Giovanni's. "I love Italian food, and this is the place to go. The problem is that the bread's so good, you can fill up on it too quick and then you can't eat anymore."

After dinner comes a jog across the street to the Edible Complex, a hip bakery where Cal-Berkeley students balance a book in one hand while eating with the other.

"This is where I worked when I first moved here," he relates. "I still stop by when I'm in the area. I'm into healthy things, but as long as I don't go nuts, I don't see anything wrong with a couple of cookies—especially these. If you try to take care of yourself, you can splurge once in a while."

Tim's edict for eating also happens to be the basis of his focused drumming style.

Alexander, better known to his friends, fans, and bandmates in Primus as "Herb," indulges without being obnoxious, grooves without falling into a rut. It's ironic, then, that despite Herb's serious approach to his craft, he happens to play in a band regarded primarily by non-musicians as inaccessible fodder.

Welcome To His World

by Matt Peiken
Photos by Andrew MacNaughton

"I sometimes get the feeling that people think we're this joke band, because Les Claypool, voice and revered bassist] has a cartoon image and he writes about things like fishing," Alexander says. "Sure, we're not this 'save the world' political band, but what we do is very serious. I love what I'm doing and I put a lot of thought into it. But I also don't think that what we do is intricate, like a lot of people seem to think. There's music a lot more intricate than what we play and bands a lot more out-there than we are."

He'd certainly know. Herb boasts an immense collection of CDs, covering all points of the globe and spanning the musical spectrum—from Ivo Papasov, a Bulgarian wedding music group, to Einstürzende Neubauten, the industrial noise band from Germany.

For those who consider Primus on the far end of the weirdness spectrum, the group's new record, *Pork Soda*, won't dispel any preconceptions. Claypool's musicianship will still go over the heads of the uninitiated. His voice still won't make anybody's Top-10 list of crooners. The lyrics? Still out of range for anybody without a strong sense of humor and a tilted approach to life.

And if you're waiting to hear a Primus cut on the radio before taking the plunge, don't hold your breath. Despite a featured spot on the Lollapalooza III tour this summer and a steady climb on the sales charts, it's not because of any audible attempt at pandering to the mainstream. In fact, Primus intentionally steers clear of anything resembling normalcy.

If there's anything easy to grasp about the Bay Area trio, it's Herb. Underneath the steady stream of odd-time signatures and Claypool's semi-lead bass work, Herb is rock steady, tasty, and clean to the bone. But don't mistake that for boring. His array of chops, flurried fills, and double-kick ditties garnered him recognition in the 1992 *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll as one of the two top up-and-comers.

Meanwhile, Herb's not placing all his cheese in one sea. He's formed a new side band called Load with stick player Ian Varriale and neighbor-guitarist Tom Butler. He played drums on three songs for bassist Michael Manring's interesting solo record, an album also featuring drummer Steve Smith. And if that weren't enough, Herb recently joined an actors workshop as a prelude to his part in independent filmmaker Rob Nilsson's new movie, *Chalk*, for which Herb is also composing the music for the soundtrack.

MP: A lot of the musical mystique of Primus stems from the way you and Les interact. Is it hard playing with a bass player who is more a soloist than a part of the rhythm section?

TA: It's difficult sometimes because, by nature, he's busy and I'm busy. I lock in with him a lot of the time, but I also have to think about whether I'm crowding him. I could easily start playing stuff over the top of what Les is doing, but I've always tried to *accentuate* what he plays.

Even though Les plays a lot of stuff, most of what he plays is fixed parts, and he doesn't stray too much. That kind of allows me to not be responsible all the time for holding down a repetitive meter. But Les also comes from a different musical background than I do in the sense that he's into soul and funk, and I'm into weirder, heavier stuff. A lot of our songs come from soundcheck jams, and he likes to sit and groove and have fun. But since I don't get to sit and play

drums while on tour, except for during the show, I like to use that time to come up with weird shit. That's when we clash on things, during soundcheck, but we also come up with cool stuff that way.

MP: Do you have a lot of freedom to play around within the framework of a song?

TA: A lot of people think I do, but I really don't. As a musician, you should know that while playing a song, you play what's supposed to fit. But I also don't want to play something that's boring; I want to enjoy it. That's where a quick roll or a double-bass accent will come in sometimes. On our new

disc, there's a tune called "Hamburger Train," and it's just a steady 6/4 groove. I couldn't just sit there and play it because it would drive me crazy, so I had to throw in some cool stuff on the hi-hat, just to make it more fun and to make me work a little. But I also try to challenge myself a lot, probably more so live than in the studio; we all feel that way. A lot of people think we really cut loose on the records, but it's not like that at all. It's a structure that you can't really see easily, but it's there. A lot of our songs are written from jams, and there are two songs on the new record that were taken just by rolling the tape as Les and I were jamming.

Herb's Prime Cuts

Here are the albums Tim lists as most inspirational to him.

Artist	Album	Drummer
Rush	all	Neil Peart
Police	all	Stewart Copeland
Peter Gabriel	So, Security, Passion	Jerry Marotta, Manu Katche'
Soundgarden	all	Matt Cameron
Frank Zappa	Shut Up 'N' Play Yer Guitar	Vinnie Colaiuta
Bob Marley	Legend, Live	Carlton Barrett
King Crimson	Discipline, Beat, Three Of A Perfect Pair	Bill Bruford
Big Country	Wonderland, The Crossing, Steeltown	Mark Brzezicki

And here are the Primus albums that, not surprisingly, Tim says best represent his drumming.

Suck On This
Frizzle Fry
Miscellaneous Debris
Sailing The Seas Of Cheese
Pork Soda

MP: Do you put a lot of thought into what you play before you record?

TA: I don't sit on the set and work out cool fills beforehand, but maybe I should. When we run tape, I just play whatever comes to mind. Sometimes it comes out really cool and other times I mess up or drop a stick—and we leave it in. For us it's like in the *Chinese Book Of Chance*, where you throw little stones, and the way those stones fall is the way it will be for that moment in time. That's kind of my approach: What I play at that moment is what will always be for *that* moment.

What I do put more thought into is the motion and the feel. Like on "Diamond Back," the motion of just running across the drums and repeating that motion—that roll—is what gave the rhythmic basis for the song. But the drum part in "Mr. Krinkle" took more thought because of the subtle dynamic changes and the tom part. I didn't know that song in-and-out when we recorded it, and there were some uncertainties coming across.

MP: Do you find it easier to do what you want to do on the drums in an odd-time format or in straight time?

TA: If something's in 4/4, like a lot of stuff on the new record, I'm going to want to try harder to do something a lit-

tle bit weirder, more so than I would in odd time. But it's not like I think 4/4 is necessarily boring, although it can be not as interesting, [laughs] The song "Mud" is in 4/4, and it's *really* interesting; I like it not because of what I'm playing, but the physical movement of it: the hi-hat keeping straight time with different things happening on the kick and snare. The snare comes in on the "&" of 3, or sometimes I'll deliberately put the kick there, or not play anything there, just to throw in something unexpected or let the whole phrase or rhythm fall to pieces. Then when you come back in, it's really cool.

A lot of the times are straight on the new record, but the patterns are changing. For instance, "Diamond Back" is in 4/4, but the pattern doesn't sound like it. It's hard

when you're writing songs to not want to give it a straight hi-hat, bass, and snare beat, because that's the first thing that comes to mind. Then when you get more familiar and comfortable with the song, your part can change a little. One thing I don't like to do is mix feels. If I'm in a tight feel or shuffle beat, it's hard for me to mentally accept going to straight

"One time in Paris, Rush was getting ready to sound-check, but Neil wasn't there yet. I sat in, playing the beat to 'Roll The Bones.' Geddy and Alex joined in, and then Neil showed up and saw me playing his song on his kit!"



quarters, it's hard to accept the sound.

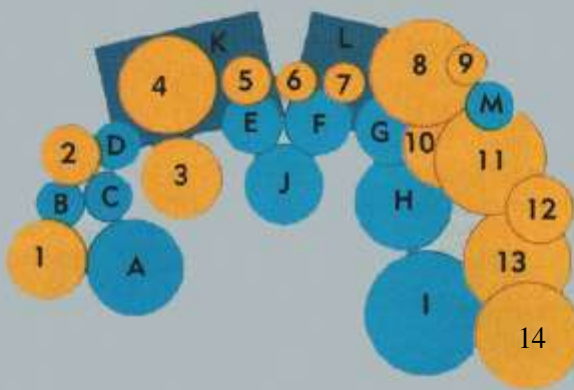
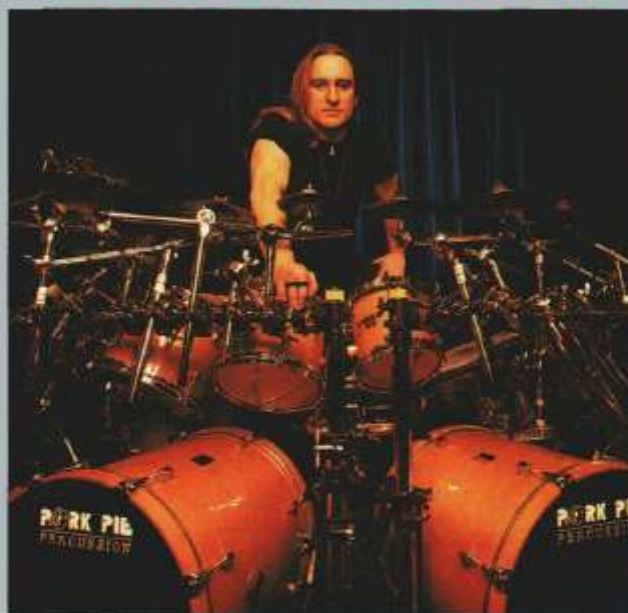
MP: Were there any songs that took a lot of thought to put together?

TA: There were a couple of songs we had to work out to get the transitions right from part to part. The song "Nature Boy" used to be a lot slower, but we wanted to see what it would sound like faster. And that ended up being pretty cool, because I used to have this weird, repetitive part on the hi-hats, and speeding it up freed me of that. The song "Diamond Back" is another beat that I just stumbled onto, but it took a little bit of memorization to be able to continually play it. What's hard is that what I'm playing doesn't have a natural flow—the roll finishing the fill on the "e" of 1. Hearing the part in your head and translating it to an efficient physical movement are two different things. You have to think ahead and know where you're going to end up, and it's not something you can do by just jamming.

MP: It seems like you made a conscious effort to get away from the hi-hat as much as you could for this record. Your playing sounds a lot more tribal this time around.

TA: That's what the guys were telling me, that it was like being in the jungle. But really, there was a lot of thinking for me on this record, a lot of things I did and didn't want to do. I didn't want the usual thing of hi-hat, bass, and snare, and then drum fills. I wanted to take a song and play a *rhythm* to it, not just a beat—more like a percussionist would play than a jazz or rock drummer. It seems like when I sit on the drums now and I see

Herb's Setup



Drumset: Pork Pie Percussion

- A. 14x18 gong bass
- B. 30 x 6 clear tube drum
- C. 15 x 6 clear tube drum
- D. 20 x 6 clear tube drum
- E. 8x8 tom
- F. 9x10 tom
- G. 10 x 12 tom
- H. 14 x 16 floor tom
- I. 18 x 22 large tom
- J. 5 1/2 x 14 Ludwig snare drum
- K. 20 x 20 bass drum
- L. 20 x 20 bass drum
- M. 25 x 6 clear tube drum

Hardware: Yamaha with Gibraltar rack system, Roc-N-Soc throne, Tama strap-drive bass drum pedals

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare, clear Ambassadors on everything else

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" China
- 2. 8" EFX
- 3. 13" hi-hats (Dynobeat top, New Beat bottom)
- 4. 16" K crash
- 5. 6" EFX
- 6. 4" splash
- 7. 4" brilliant splash
- 8. 17" Rock crash
- 9. LP Ice Bell
- 10. 13" hi-hats (same as above)
- 11. 20" Impulse ride
- 12. 10" chow gong
- 13. 18" Wuhan China
- 14. 18" Rock crash

Sticks: Vic Firth SD 1 Generals with Pro-Mark stick wrap

a big rack of toms in front of me, I want to play them as much as the other drums and try to find some interesting things. I've listened to a lot of music since we made the last record, and I've just been craving to hear modern music done with this rhythmic base. As a group, we talked about it a little, and maybe I was even thinking too much and not feeling enough. But everything I play is from feeling. I don't count, I don't read the music; I barely know *how* to read music. I've tried to teach myself from 8th notes and 16th notes, but I wouldn't have a clue if you put a chart up in front of me and asked me to get through it. Everything I've learned or played has come from my ear.

MP: "Wounded Knee" is a drumset/percussion composition on the new album. What inspired you to put that together? It's hard to pick out what you're doing.

TA: That's because I played two drum kits, one of them in 3/4 and the other in 4/4, each playing separate parts. "The Rhythmist" by Stewart Copeland was a big influence on me for creating this piece. I played everything on this one—two tracks of marimba, African thumb piano, and various percussion instruments. The basic drum beat came first, then I set a delay on my drums to get the effect of them bouncing back and forth. The second kit served the role of a percussion unit. The piece is like a lot of the stuff that I've put together in my spare time. I was nervous playing it for the other guys because it's very much in the "Herb" realm, very percussion-y.

continued on page 44

Pork Chops

• by Jeff Wald

Groove, creativity, and chops all come to mind when listening to Primus's latest release, *Pork Soda*. Tim Alexander offers up a good deal of fresh and completely original playing on this disc. He's able to complement the band's wacky material in a unique way.



"My Name Is Mud"

This song opens with a heavy groove in which bassist Les Claypool plays a very double-bass sounding riff. Alexander starts with a simple pattern (first example), then slowly elaborates on it, to the point where he's duplicating the rhythm played on the bass guitar with his double bass and gong drums.

(Tempo: quarter note = 100)



"Welcome To This World"

Tim rides on the tom rim during the opening of the tune (first example), then breaks into a driving half-time tom shuffle (second example). At the bridge the band goes into a nice "funkish" groove (third example). Note Tim's use of Octobans to state the feel, while still leaving space for all that's going on.

(Tempo: dotted-quarter note = 128, quarter note = 104 in bridge)



"DMV"

Here's a nice, in-your-face kind of tune with some solid double basswork.

(Tempo: quarter note = 125)



"The Ol' Diamond Back Sturgeon"

This track features Tim incorporating different components of his set in the groove, including double hi-hat, toms, and Octobans.

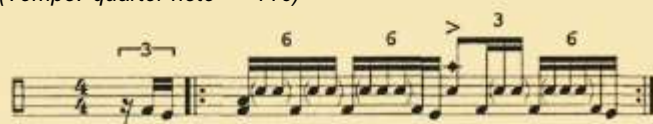
(Tempo: quarter note = 132)



"Pork Soda"

This is one of the funniest songs on the album, but it also has one of the coolest drum grooves. It's just a great pattern in which Tim shows his double-bass chops and some very precise ghost notes, giving the groove a "stutter" effect.

(Tempo: quarter note = 116)

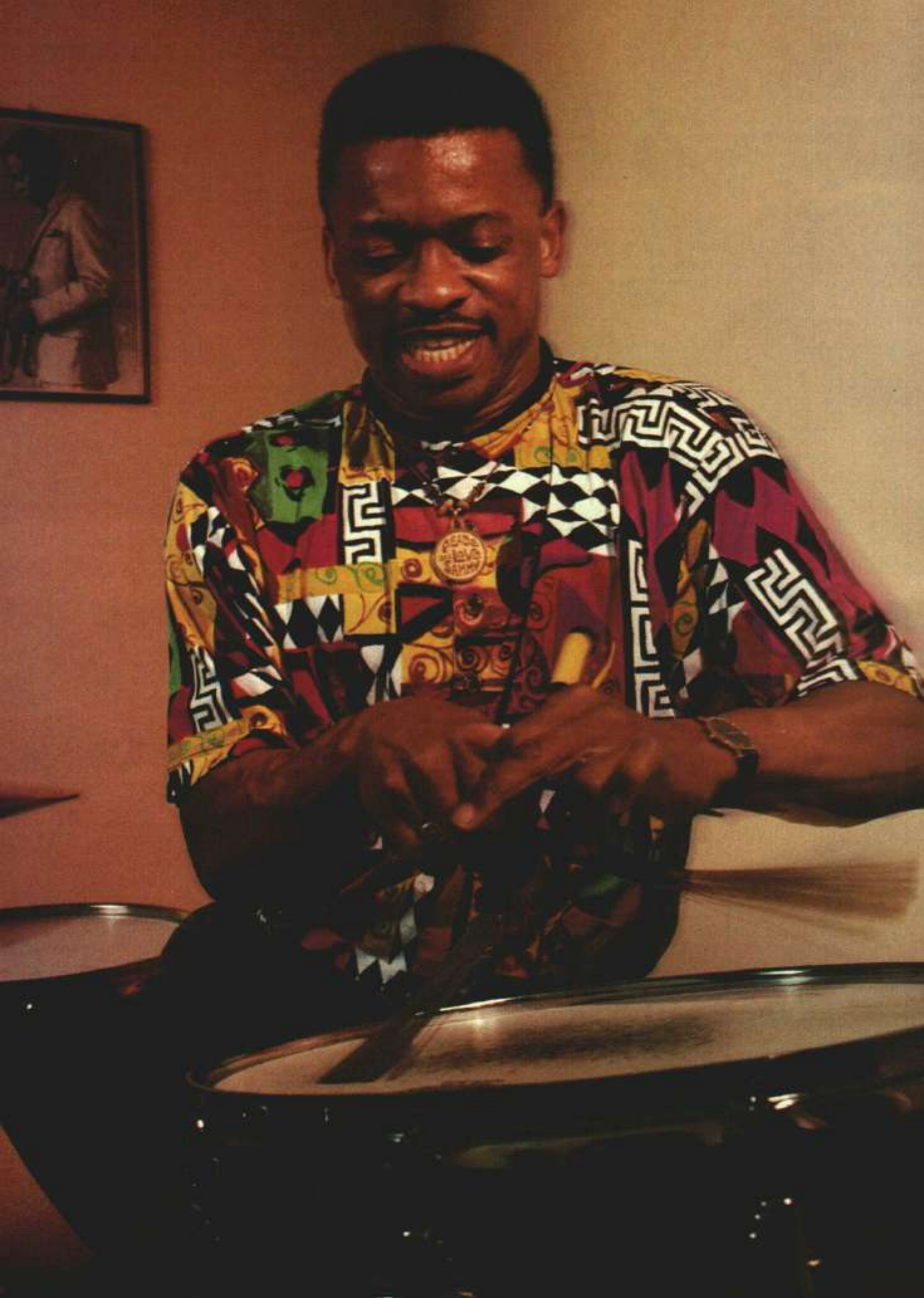


"Hamburger Train"

Primus jams for eight minutes on this 6/4 piece. Here's the basic groove and two variations.

(Tempo: quarter note = 128)





Clayton Cameron

BRUSH MESSIAH

The writing was on the wall: Twenty-odd years ago, as musical styles seemed hell-bent on getting louder and louder, brushes were definitely on the way out. If you go back and read early issues of MD, for instance, many big-name drummers spoke mournfully of the "lost art." The elegant motion, the quiet sustain, the urbane swish—all treasures that new generations of drummers would think of as relics. Yes, the *grace* of drumming was dying.

How do you resurrect something considered a thing of the past? For brush playing, it would take a near miracle. While there were working drummers using brushes, some-

one would have to master the art, and even more importantly, make it *contemporary*.

Enter Clayton Cameron. Through his highly acclaimed video, *The Living Art Of Brushes*, and his many concert and clinic performances across the country, Cameron has been converting the drum masses. He's taken the best of what's come before and used it as a jumping-off point for new brush-discoveries. And while some might scoff at crediting him with single-handedly renewing interest in the art, who can deny the rebirth of brush playing since Clayton came on the scene? (Have you noticed all the new brush models coming out lately?)

ing his own?)

After seven years with the legendary Sammy Davis, Jr. and some ups and downs career-wise due to his locale, the thirty-four-year-old Cameron recently left Los Angeles for the more jazz-friendly New York, a move he felt would give him better opportunities to further the cause. Well, it didn't take him long to land gigs. In fact, Clayton recently accepted the prestigious drum chair with Tony Bennett, a performer who's experienced a bit of rebirth of his own with his chart topping, Grammy-winning disc *Perfectly Frank*. For Clayton Cameron it's a perfect opportunity to spread the word: Brushes are alive!

BY WILLIAM F. MILLER
PHOTOS BY EBET ROBERTS



"I THINK WITH A LOT OF GUYS, THEIR DYNAMIC RANGE STARTS

WFM: What is it about brushes that so inspires you?

CC: I'd have to say sound. I love the many different sounds that brushes are able to produce. Plus, the types of sounds available are, to me, so musical. I've developed a lot of different strokes and techniques with brushes that give me a broad palette of sounds to choose from.

WFM: You know *now* what excites you about brushes, but what motivated you in the beginning?

CC: When I was a young drum student, I heard about brushes and I knew drummers used them, but I didn't know exactly what was going on. I asked my teacher at the time, Clarence Johnson, "What's happening with these things?" So he showed me a basic pattern, and I was wondering, "That's *it*?" I figured there must be something more, but I sort of left it there. Other drummers I spoke to about brushes had the attitude that, when they played them, they just tried to stay out of the way musically.

Well, I was at a jam session after that, and we played a ballad I used brushes on. I thought I was doing what was needed, but when the tune was over the leader turned to me and said, "You should take brushes more seriously." Well, that, to me, was a slap in the face. From then on I decided to not take brushes for granted.

WFM: I would say you've done a bit more than that. When did you really start to focus on brushes?

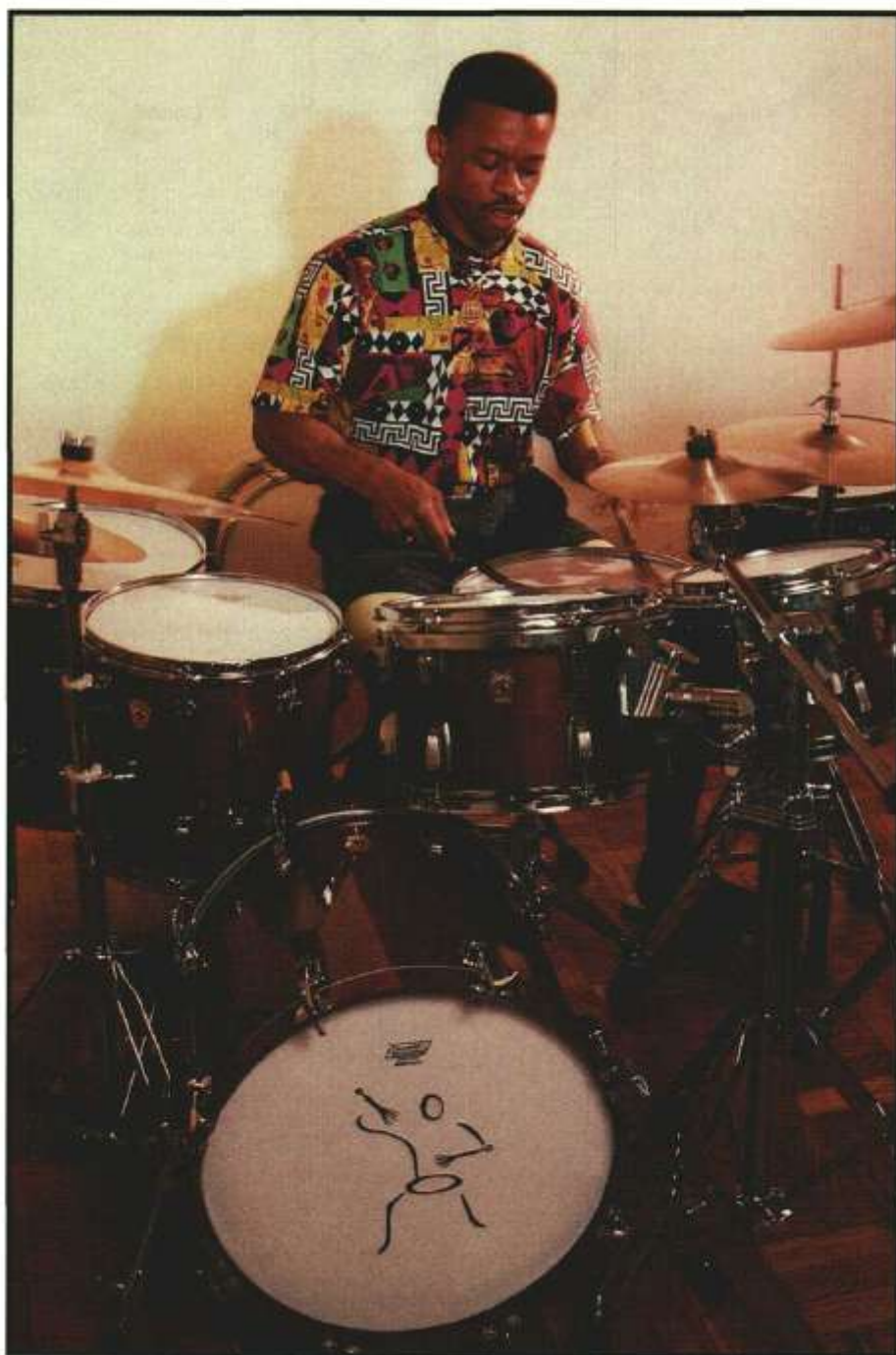
CC: That really didn't start to happen until I got out of college. I was lucky to get a gig in the lounge of the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas. It was a piano trio gig, and the pianist was Kirk Stewart, a great player who could play all styles. He really wanted me to keep the volume down, and the manager of the room was also on us to keep it quiet. Well, first I tried using a 7A stick, playing as softly as I could, but I think the timbre of the stick on the cymbal was too much for them. It was obvious I *had* to play brushes. So I

ended up playing brushes constantly, three sets a night for eight months. That sort of helps get your foundation together!

During that time I did research on brushes to find different ways to apply them. Also, a former teacher of mine, Raymond Pounds, happened to be working in town, and he came by to see me play. After the gig he came up

to me and snatched the brushes out of my hands! He took me back to his place and gave me some suggestions. I thought I was doing things correctly from what I'd heard on recordings, but Raymond showed me that my sound was lacking; he had me lower my hands to get more brush on the head. That helped a lot.

Even after all of that time working



AT ABOUT MEZZO FORTE AND GOES UP. I LIKE PLAYING SOFT.'

on brushes, I still wasn't satisfied with what I was doing. I went to see Louie Bellson give a drum clinic, and he opened my eyes. During one of his solos, Louie picked up the brushes and played what I call "rimflexes," where you hit the rim of the drum with the shank of the brush, allowing the wires to get multiple strokes on the head. He did it only briefly, but man, I swear I didn't hear another thing for the rest of the clinic! I just locked right into that one thing.

I started working on that heavily, to the point now where I can control every bounce, from singles, doubles, triples, whatever. Just seeing Louie do that, though, took me in another direction. Up to that point I thought of brushes as being able to do a certain thing, but Louie opened my mind.

WFM: I know you refer to those as "specialty strokes," but how important are they in the overall picture of brush playing?

CC: When students come to study with me today, they all want to get right into those things. It's cool to play the flashy stuff, but you can't play a gig just knowing how to play a rimflex or a rimroll. You have to know how to keep time with brushes, how to sweep, and how to play all tempos. I didn't start out playing rimflexes and rimrolls. You have to get the foundation together first.

On the other hand, I do feel there is a place for specialty strokes. When I was with Sammy Davis, Jr. I was really starting to get into some of these things. I would practice them before soundcheck, and the percussionist in the band, who set up behind me, would always ask, "Where are you going to use *that*?" I was really

infuriated at that because, to me, those strokes and exercises were almost like a pianist practicing *ascale*. It's another sound to master and apply to the music.

Along with the things you mentioned doing to develop your brush work, I would imagine you went back and studied a lot of the old brush masters. Who were some of the important figures to you?

CC: Philly [Joe Jones] was an important influence in me. Not only because of his great sound and feel, but because of how he phrased. Also, he was the first person I heard do a rimroll, which

is where you lay the brush on the drum and roll it across the drum with your hand on top of it.

I also checked out Klook [Kenny Clarke]. I really enjoyed his brush playing. Vernell Fournier with Ahmad Jamal was a favorite of mine, too. Also, Lawrence Marable, who played with Bird, worked around LA, and I would check him out whenever I could. And there was a local drummer I liked by the name of Curtis Kirk, who inspired me as well.

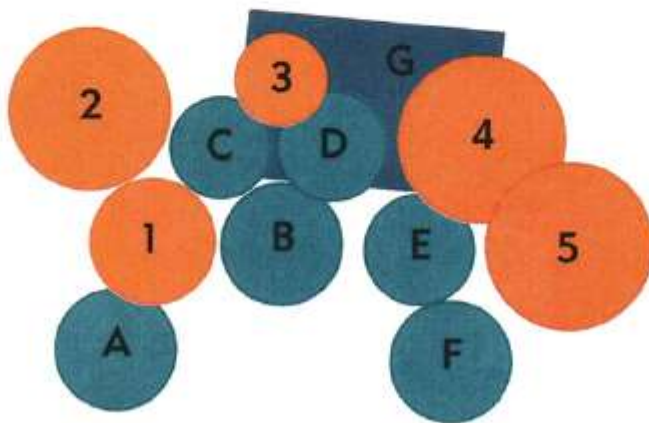
I always kept on the lookout for brushes. If I saw somebody using them, I really analyzed what they were doing. I found a lot of similarities in players, and I didn't feel that brushes had been taken past a certain level—after a while it seemed to me that there were only a few things to look for. For instance, most drummers play brushes in a clockwise motion. Raymond Pounds told me that he thought Philly was one of the few drummers who would play clockwise *and* counter-clockwise. Obviously that's not something you can tell from a record—the sound is the bottom line—but it shows that there's a certain amount of freedom with brushes.

Something else I heard that Philly did was, when he used brushes, he would turn his left hand over—palm down with traditional grip—to get more of the brush on the head. I always use that grip now because I've found that I'm able to access different sounds more readily. I don't have to bend the brush as far as you might have to if you played using the regular position.

WFM: You came up during the time when a lot of people were not even learning tradi-

continued on page 63

CLAYTON'S SETUP



Drumset: Ludwig Super Classic

- A. 6 1/2 x 14 hammered bronze snare drum
- B. 5 x 14 *Black Beauty* snare drum
- C. 8 x 10 tom
- D. 8 x 12 tom
- E. 13 x 13 floor tom
- F. 14 x 14 floor tom
- G. 18 x 20 (or 18 x 18) bass drum

Hardware: Ludwig

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 13" K hi-hat
- 2. 18" K crash
- 3. 8" splash
- 4. 20" K ride
- 5. 20" *Pre-Aged K* sizzle (with rivets)

Sticks: Calato Regal Tip 8A model

Brushes: Calato Clayton Cameron model

Heads: Ludwig Ensemble (white coated) model

Touring Drum

For most touring musicians, being away from home is the hardest part of the job—particularly for those with a family. In the case of Garth Brooks' road drummer, Mike Palmer, having a baby on the way made it even harder. Palmer had already reconciled with himself that he would not be around for the birth of his son. But with some luck and graciousness on Brooks' part, Mike was actually able to be there.

"We were flying out to LA. to do a radio and records seminar," Palmer recounted. "We

picked up Garth on the way to the airport, and when he came on the bus, he said, 'What the hell are you doing here?' He knew my wife was due. But I said, 'I'm still your drummer, ain't I?' He said, 'Go home and spend the night with your wife, and fly back tomorrow morning.'

"At about 4:00 in the morning, Kathy went into labor, and at 7:00 I took her to the hospital. I was packed and ready to leave for LA, knowing I had to leave at 9:00 to meet the plane. The nurse said, 'If you leave, you're going to miss your child,

because this baby is coming today!' But Garth just said, 'Don't worry about it. We'll take care of our thing here and you take care of your thing there.' Our son Schaeffer came at 2:30 that afternoon. Garth ended up performing a little acoustic set."

Palmer, who was in LA performing a benefit with Brooks for the rebuilding of Southeast LA was seated on the tour bus for this interview. He had a hectic day ahead of him performing two shows with the country superstar. "Being away is tough, but with

Country mers

ON THE ROAD WITH COUNTRY'S FINEST

Garth, everything is easy because everyone gets along with each other," Palmer says. "Everyone on the tour has the attitude that we'll do whatever is good for the whole, so we all pitch in. In the beginning, I used to jump off the stage in clubs and go out front to sell T-shirts. Then Garth would come out to sign autographs for people, and while he was doing that, the road manager would sell the shirts and I'd tear down my drums."

A far cry from the way it is now. Brooks has become a musical phenomenon, and

they've gone from playing clubs to 18,000-seat arenas. In fact, they recently booked a Texas club under a pseudonym, just for the fun of it. By 10:00 P.M., people began to recognize Brooks by the back door, and the place became packed in no time. Palmer says the change in venue did alter his playing a tad. "There were fewer cymbals and toms, but I still smacked them as hard as I could. I'm pretty much of a basher, which is what Garth wants. He wants that energy and the look. So I've cut my sleeves off and tried to build up. The showmanship is

fine with me, because it was the ultimate dream when I met Garth."

Mike had slugged it out in Florida with the same three musicians for seven years. While doing some fairs, he came in contact with a country entertainer by the name of Clyde Foley Cummings. It wasn't his ideal gig, but it gave him the opportunity to work with someone whose prime motivation was entertainment. It also moved him to Nashville. "That's where I met our steel guitar player," Mike recalls. "He had already been rehears-

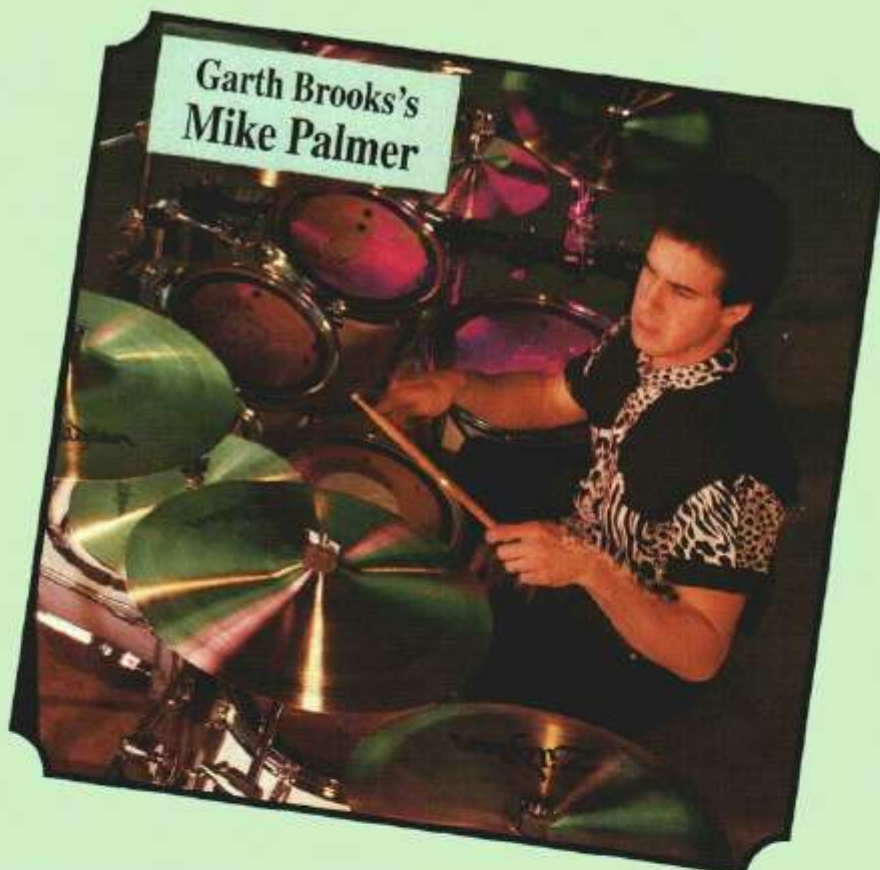
By Robyn Flans

Photos By Rick Malkin

ing with Garth, who was looking for another drummer. I just got my name thrown into a hat. The first thing that Garth said to me was, 'I want to rock this country. I want to put a little edge on it. I don't want to go out there and play the music they hear on the radio. I want to give them something extra.'" Mike adds that Brooks never auditioned him. He just went on the recommendation of his playing—and, more importantly, his instinct about Palmer as a person.

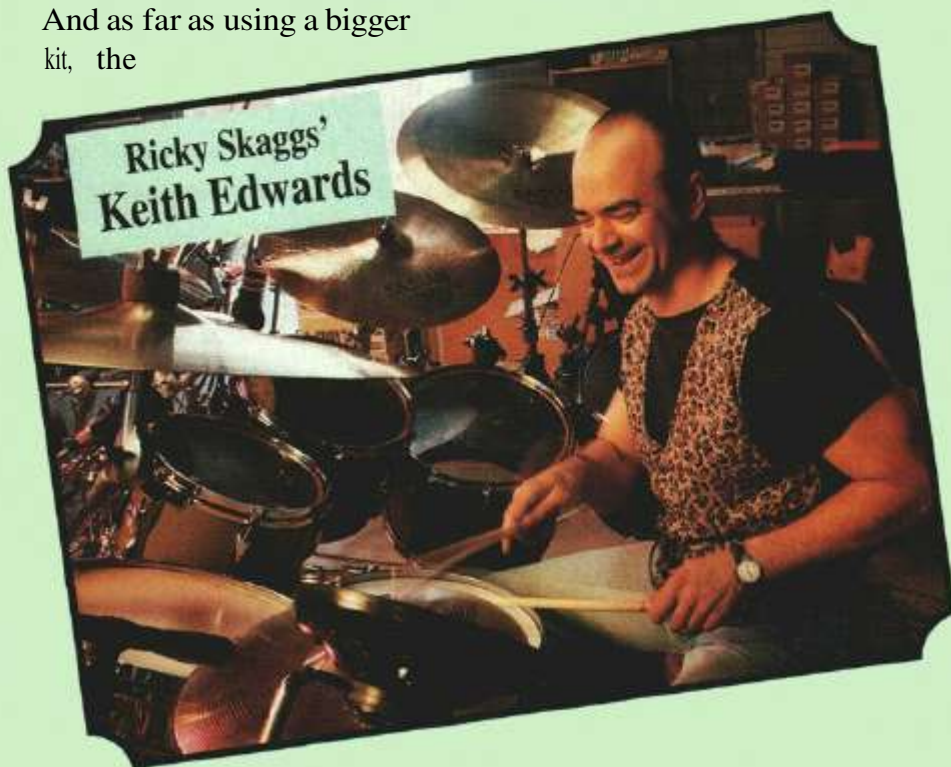
Moving into the arenas did take some adjustment, Mike recalls. "We sort of eased into it. The first time we played arenas, we were opening for Don Williams and I was using John Gardner's kit. In the large arenas, you pretty much lose the ghost notes. On 'Dixie Chicken,' there's a little break where it's just me and the bass player and maybe a little chunkin' on the guitar, so I'll put little ghost notes in there, hoping they can hear it. You do lose the little things. I found that if you are going to do little taps on the cymbal, they're not going to be heard, so I try to make them a little more authoritative. I'm still trying to be classy about it, though."

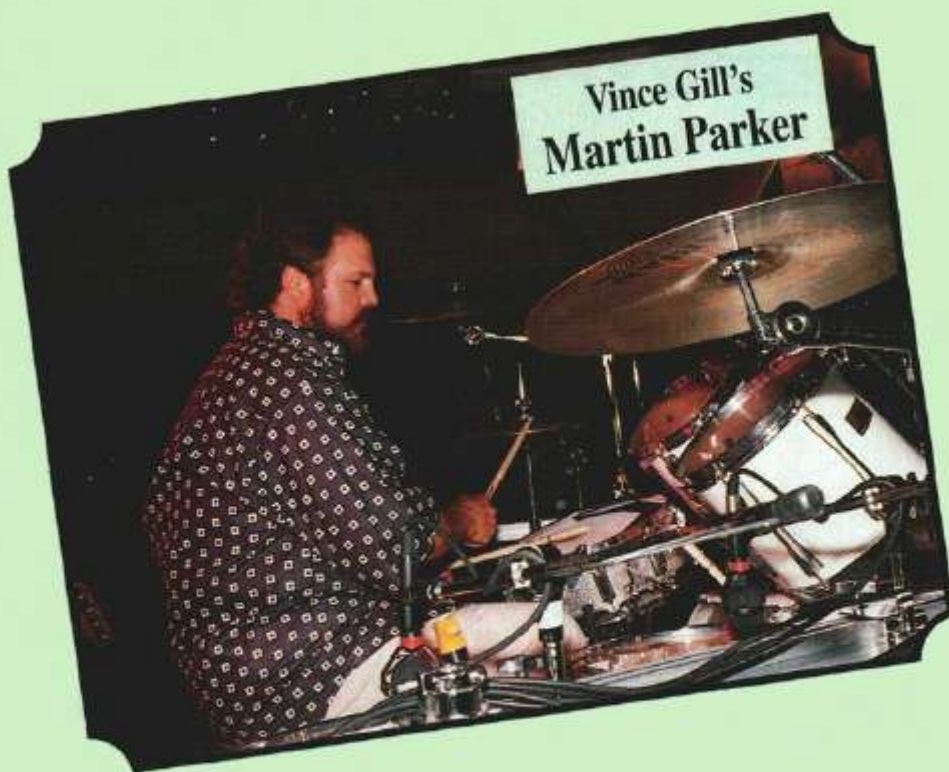
Eventually, Palmer had to get a larger kit. "When I first got the gig, I happened to see Robert Palmer. His drummer had a floor tom on the left-hand side of his kit, which he never really used. I thought if I separated the toms like that,



and did this little motion with my hands, instead of just right to left, it would look cool. So I do open-hand fills. It's not anything revolutionary, but it did take a little getting used to. And as far as using a bigger kit, the

further the albums went, the heavier the music got, and Garth was saying, 'You need a bigger drumkit. Let's rock out.'"





Palmer says that for the live show Brooks uses the records as the basis, but prefers to embellish the songs. "I have a lot of respect for Milton Sledge," Mike says of Garth's studio drummer. "I generally take what he does, although a lot of times Garth will say to throw it out the window. A good example was on 'Face To Face,' from the last album. I went down to the studio to get all the percussion things that Milton did into the sampler. I was prepared to do it as close to the record as I could, but Garth said, 'Why don't you do some kind of cadence?' So I do this little snare drum thing, switching off the hi-hats and toms. The crew guys were saying it's a little like '50 Ways To Leave Your Lover,' but it's 16th notes. I think Garth described it to me as 'The Downeaster Alexa,' from Billy Joel's *Storm Front*.

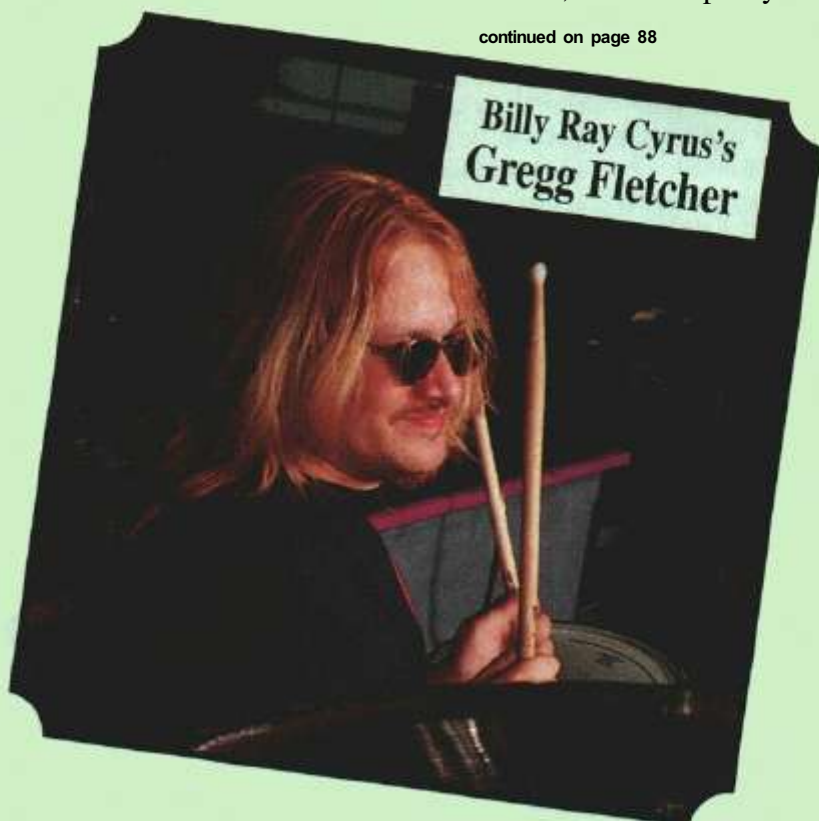
Liberty DeVitto does this little paradiddle thing and then it's this big floor tom cannon. I was working off that idea, trying to incorporate the hi-hat and snare.

"Another compliment I give

to Garth is on his arrangements. I've never been in the studio while he's recording an album, but my theory is that everyone has input. Garth pretty much knows what he wants to hear. He has great melodies and arrangements. He wants it real soft after the chorus and right before the bridge, and that's what I think is the idea behind being a drummer—to be musical. I guess that's what I always liked about music—not the dance beats where you can teach a monkey to play it, but the variety of the song and all the different things that go into it.

"Some of my favorite songs include 'Lonesome Dove,' which is in 7/4. 'Burning Bridges' is nice, even though it's a pretty straight thing. In the show we start off with 'The Rodeo,' which is pretty cool. I

continued on page 88



New KAT Products

■ by Ed Uribe

Whether you're an electronics novice or expert—KAT has something for you.

Earlier this year KAT released several new products, as well as upgrades to existing products. This month we'll take a look at four of them. Two of the four products—the *dk10* and the *EZ 2.0*—expand the KAT line to truly provide a controller for every level and type of MIDI musician. The other two—the *poleKAT* and the *miniKICK*—extend KAT's already dynamite MIDI percussion accessory product line.

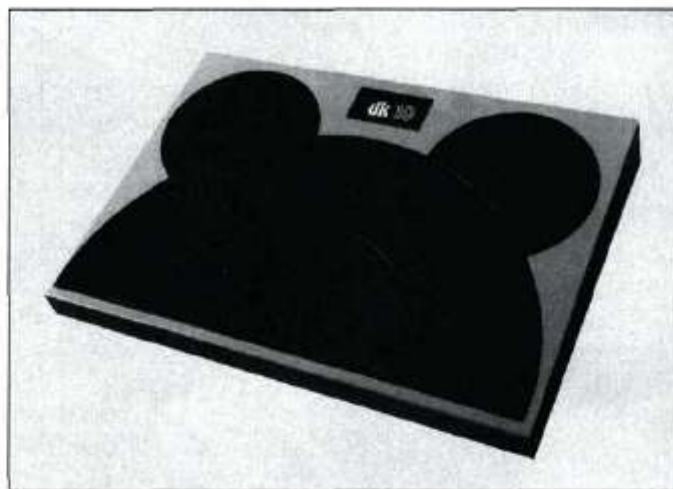
The *dk10*

KAT's newest controller is designed to fit the entry-level market affordably. Hence, the *dk10* is set up to plug in and play right out of the box. You do need a tone generator, of course, but outside of this and three connections—power, MIDI, and audio—the unit is pre-programmed to automatically address the sounds in most drum machines.

The *dk10* provides you with ten kit locations. Locations 1 to 6 are programmed at the factory into ROM (Read Only Memory), meaning you can't change them. Locations 7 to 9 also have factory programs, but you can edit them and save to them. Kit 10—called location 0—doubles as the edit buffer for the unit (the area a unit uses for active edits). Any change you make to one of the user kits in locations 7 through 9 automatically copies the contents of that kit to location 0—overwriting anything there. When you finish your edits, you would copy this kit back to one of the user kits.

This arrangement kind of makes the *dk10* a *dk9½*. Although you *can* use location 0 as a kit, you certainly wouldn't store anything you were hoping to keep there. However, this kit is useful if you are making several and frequent changes (such as you might make in a recording or sequencing session, when you're doing several passes and changing sounds for each one). Of course, if you did accidentally overwrite something at location 0, you really wouldn't have a very big problem—since setting up kits on this unit is a breeze.

If you're just getting started, probably the best thing you can do is just play the *dk10*'s pre-programmed kits. There are various drumsets and percussion kits, including one kit with a blues



scale programmed so that you can play melodic patterns.

All the kits are programmed with the "General MIDI" spec in mind. General MIDI is a relatively new system that provides a minimum level of standardization in the MIDI world. With regards to percussion, it states, among other things, instructions for what sounds should appear at which note numbers. If a unit conforms to General MIDI then there has to at least be a closed hi-hat sound at note F#1(42) and an open one at A#1(46), a kick drum at C#1(36), and so on. This is really only the tip of the iceberg, but as far as the *dk10* is concerned, it guarantees that you will be able to play good versions of kits on most of the more popular drum units—and even some of the not-so-popular ones.

Once you've reached the point where you want to select your own sounds, you'll need to learn a very few edit commands. The ten playing surfaces also double as "buttons" one through ten. These ten buttons—along with two foot pedals—are all you need for all the edits. To select a kit, you hold both foot switches down and hit the pad number of the kit you want. To assign sounds to a kit, you hold the "edit note" foot switch and hit the pad you want to work with until you hear the sound you want to play. When you're done editing, just copy the kit from location 0 to one of the user locations.

The *dk10* also supports MIDI Auto Train, a feature that lets you program your sounds and channels by hitting the pads on your drum machine or keyboard. It has two trigger inputs on the back: one for a kick drum trigger (with four adjustable parameters for sensitivity) and one for a hi-hat trigger. The *dk10* will "read" the hi-hat input on power-up to determine what type of hi-hat pedal you are using. If you are using a *hatKAT* hi-hat pedal, you will get a velocity-sensitive foot sound and Controller information will be sent out for expressive hi-hat control.

The hi-hat mode allows any pad you designate to be assigned three notes—one as an open, one as a closed, and one as a foot hi-hat sound that is played with the pedal. You can assign any sound to these notes, so in effect you could make all the pads

hi-hat pads if you so desired and do some pretty interesting stuff. Aside from normal hi-hat functions, you could assign one group of percussion sounds to the open hi-hat location and another to the closed location—thereby doubling your playing surfaces. Leave your foot off the pedal to play the first set of sounds, then depress the pedal to play the second set. And if you don't want to hear a sound when you depress the pedal, you can assign a blank note number to it. The *dklO* also supports the MIDI Bulk Dump and Receive command so that you can save your kits to an outside source.

While all of this simplicity of use is terrific for the entry-level user, the big pluses for me are in the next two points. First, the playing surface and triggering circuitry: Even though it is an entry-level product (by virtue of its limited memory and editing capabilities), the *dklO* offers the same high-quality surface and has the same sensitivity and response that has made KAT the product of choice for high-level MIDI percussion recording and performance situations. Second: You are not just buying a KAT *dklO*. You are buying *into* the KAT concept of never having to buy another controller. When you're ready for more power, you send your unit back to be upgraded—for a reasonable fee. What starts out as a *dklO* can ultimately wind up as a top-of-the-line *drumKAT 3.0*—at a fraction of what it would cost to buy a new unit each time.

Furthermore, KAT prides itself on being responsive to its customers. When the *dklO* was first released, KAT received a letter from a user who was not satisfied with the dynamics on the pads with the drum machine he was using. That machine was one of those super low-end units that takes the MIDI velocity spectrum (0-127) and divides it up into about fifteen increments. It's simply not very good. Nonetheless, KAT created an upgrade chip. The *dklO* initially had one optimized curve for most drum machines. With this new chip, it now has four user-selectable curves for the pads and four for the trigger inputs. As a result, regardless of your machine or playing style, you'll have options to work with to get great response from the controller.

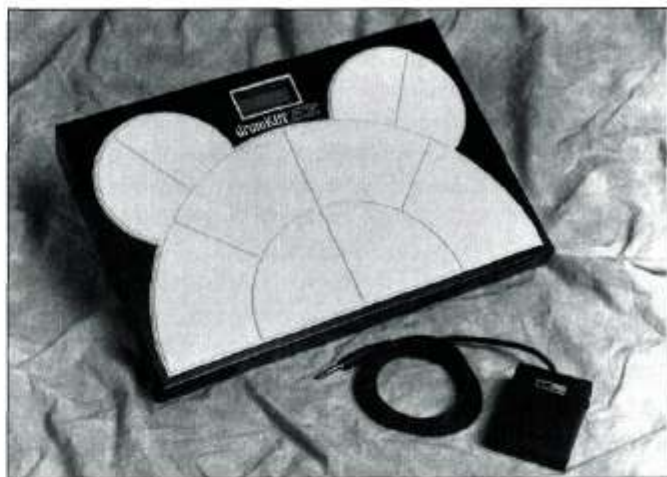
Keep in mind, though, that the receiving unit has to be capable of handling the dynamic range you want. You can't get something from where it does not exist. The upgrade is provided for a \$15 charge to anyone who bought an original *dklO*. All new *dklOs* are shipped with the upgrade.

The drumKAT EZ 2.0

With the addition of the *dklO* to KAT's controller line, the *EZ* now takes the middle spot in terms of features. It's just as easy to use as the *dklO* and it sports some of the power of the *drumKATJ.O*.

Of course, all of the controllers have KAT's responsive playing surface, circuitry, and upgrade path. But the *EZ* sports one feature that even the *drumKAT* doesn't have—inputs for the *malletKAT Expander* modules.

The *EZ* has four levels—beginner, intermediate, advanced,



and expert—allowing the user to choose from the minimal, essential performance features all the way to the power-user features available. In each mode, only the applicable windows are available to the user. As you step up through the modes, more edit windows are made available. This nice feature provides the power for you once you need it, but keeps it out of your way if you don't. (And it's not there to confuse you if you don't quite understand all the functions yet.)

To further aid you along, there are help screens that scroll in if you wait momentarily at an edit prompt. These help screens are programmed to display in English, Spanish, or Italian.

As with the *dklO*, all the editing on the *EZ* is done with ten pads as "buttons" and with a couple of foot switches. This consistency of interface is another great KAT feature. You start and learn on a *dklO*, then step up to an *EZ*, and then to a *KAT 3.0*. You just have to learn the additional features of your upgrade. You *don't* have to start all over and learn a whole new unit. The ten pads have the same functions in the edit mode on all three units. Learn it once, and get on with your music.

The Beginner Mode

In the beginner mode you only have two windows made available to you—but within them lie four to sixteen kits pre-programmed to most of the drum machines available today. The nice feature here is that KAT went through every one of these drum machines and programmed the names of all the factory sounds in all the machines.

You can select your machine and your sounds by name—such as "Roland R-8 Mondo Kick," not "C#1-37"—a much more user-friendly approach, especially if you're just getting into this stuff. After you pick the sound source you have in the one edit screen and go back to the play mode, you select from the various pre-programmed kits and just play. That's all there is to it.

The Intermediate Mode

Here you can move from using only factory kits to user kits. There are thirty-two fully editable user memory locations. You can select different sounds for your kits, as well as some performance parameters dealing with velocity curves. These are not presented with numbers or curve names. They are presented in understandable terms like "Smooth Response" instead of "Linear Velocity Curve #8." You can also name your kits here, as well as use all of the features from the beginner mode.

The Advanced Mode

In this mode you can further customize your unit to fit your developing needs and style. In addition to the features of the two previous modes, you can now also send program changes to your tone generators—as well as enter the preferences and trigger function areas. These two screens are referred to as "tunnel screens"—a term used to describe screens that contain sub-screens dealing with certain specific parameters. You don't have to enter a tunnel area from the main screen. The unit prompts you for a second hit of a pad to enter those screens. The "trigger adjust" screens in this mode do just that. They provide you with screens that allow you to edit the performance parameters of trigger sources connected to the back of your unit. (If you don't have triggers plugged in yet, then you don't have to go into this editing area, which keeps the unit easier to deal with.)

The Preferences section provides you with a set of sub-screens that allow you to do some functional customization of your unit. For example, you can turn the Song mode on and off. The Song mode allows you to chain kits into a particular order, set the viewing angle of your LCD display, sound a "beep" every time you perform an edit, lock and unlock your unit to accept or deny changes, and select the language that you see your help screens in. You can also turn off the sound names from each kit in case you're more used to working with note numbers or you've altered the sounds and their locations in your drum machines and they no longer correspond to the names in the KAT.

The Expert Mode

This is where you can put *all* of the *EZ*'s power to work. In this mode the unit is capable of handling a reasonably extensive MIDI rig. All of the features of the previous modes are available. You can now also address additional performance parameters of each individual pad or trigger. You can adjust MIDI channel, gate time, curves, minimum and maximum velocity, threshold, and the like.

In the MIDI performance and control realm you can adjust the sending and receiving of program changes, select up to three sounds per pad or trigger source and play them as a layer, switch between them (based on how hard you play), blend them (based on how hard you play) or do a cross-fade, use a convenient—but essential—copy function for the settings of individual pads or entire kits, or address the parameters of the mallet expanders. Here you also adjust the parameter of the breath controller and hi-hat inputs. With a breath controller you can send pitch bend,

modulation, or panning commands to your modules (or use it as a trigger source and play a note with your mouth).

The final set of adjustments here pertain to KAT's excellent hi-hat control function. (You can use any trigger source and assign a hi-hat to it, but to *really* make this unit—and your hi-hat playing—shine, you should use a *hatKAT*.) You can assign up to five hi-hat notes on the *EZ* as well as send controller messages. KAT's is really one of the best-working hi-hat implementations I've ever played—and I've tried many. The *EZ* also offers parameters for addressing misfiring or cross-talk between the triggers placed on acoustic drums, and it contains a limited sequencer that you can use to record and play patterns.

The rear panel features four inputs for foot switches (used for editing as well as for some performance parameters), one MIDI in and two MIDI out jacks (the MIDI in can be directed to the two MIDI outs), three Mallet Expander inputs, and three stereo trigger inputs. You can plug in up to six trigger sources: either three two-zone pads (with either mono or stereo outputs) or six individual pads. You must use a "Y" cable to have six mono inputs.

Conclusions

If you're just starting in electronics, or you know that you'll never need more than an excellent performance source for simply playing your drums and percussion, then the *dkIO* is an excellent choice. It's priced at \$499. If you're already into MIDI percussion, the *EZ* might be a better choice, at \$849. Of course you can always treat yourself to a *drumKAT 3.0* if and when you outgrow your *EZ*. No matter which unit you buy, you can't lose, since each provides an upgrade path to the next.

The poleKAT

This new trigger source is in the shape of a 12" tube with a rubberized strip along the top. It has two zones and two out-



puts. You can use only one output and use both pads as one trigger source or use both outputs and have two triggers on the one unit.

I like the feel of the rubber quite a bit. It's soft and bouncy enough, and quiet! The *poleKAT* can be mounted with any mount or clamp that can accommodate the thickness of the tube. It can be plugged into any of the KAT units (*EZ*, *drumKAT*, *miniKAT*, *miniKICK*) and is a great addition to either an acoustic or electric rig. It lists for \$169.

The miniKICK

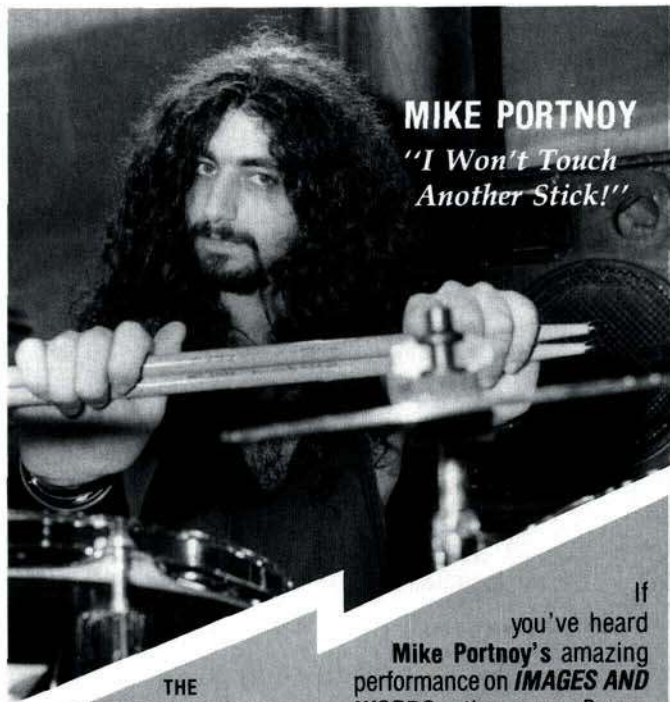
The *miniKICK* is the newest addition to KAT's bass drum trigger line. Though KAT's *fatKAT* foot-operated trigger provides great sensitivity and response, it isn't a real bass drum

pedal—although it's my choice for a hi-hat trigger. And their *kickKAT* is really solid, allows you to use your real pedal, and provides a certain visual appeal as a kick drum unit, but it's fairly large and not easy to transport.

Enter the *miniKICK*. This little unit attaches to your bass drum pedal and comes with a rod to set your beater ball so it plays facing downwards onto the pad surface. It will require a little adjusting of your pedal, but once you're done with that, you will enjoy a great trigger source. The rubber used for the pad surface feels great and responds extremely well. It also works great with all the

KAT units and should work equally well with all good interfaces. It is small but very sturdy, and the spurs grasp very well, so it won't get away from you when you're getting into

it. If you want to use your bass drum pedal and need portability, this may be what you're looking for. List price is \$169.



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New Kenner Snare Drums



Kenner Scotty Hawkins Snare Drum

Kenner's new *Scotty Hawkins* model snare drum is made from alternating staves of solid cardinal and maple woods. The 4x14, ten-lug drum also features polished solid brass lugs and tension rods, die-cast hoops, and a hand-carved, solid-wood handle for the die-cast strainer. Kenner's 4x14 *Billy Thomas* model snare is similar to the *Scotty Hawkins* drum, except that it features an all-cardinal wood shell. **Kenner Drum Company, Rt. #1, Box 150, California, KY 41007, (606) 635-5218.**

Kaman Powerflex Percussion Bags

Kaman states that their new *Powerflex* percussion bag line features weather-, puncture-, soil-, and stain-resistant black 1200 *DenierAction* fabric; puncture-proof, foam-lined interiors; 500-pound-test straps; nylon zipper stops; soft grip handles; and ABS inserts for added durability. Kaman's *Powerflex Import* series was designed for the semi-touring player. These bags are similar to the *Powerflex* line, yet are slightly lighter-duty and consequently less expensive. **Kaman Music Corp., P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002.**

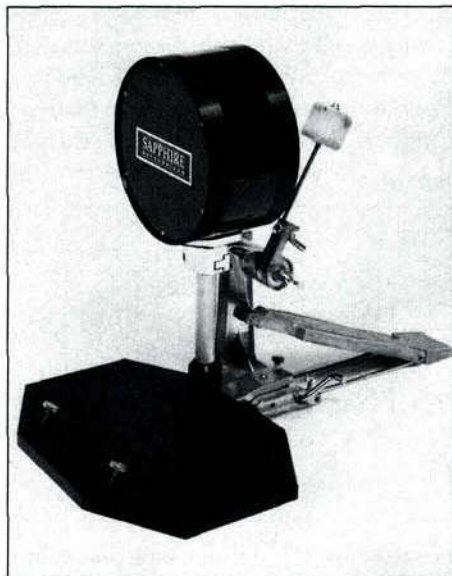
LP Reintroduces Bar Chimes

Latin Percussion have reintroduced their *Bar Chimes* with new features, including stronger self-dampening Kevlar strings and "environmentally sensitive" Siam oak wood. According to LP, the strings are also attached in a unique way that allows for easy re-stringing and more strength. The chimes themselves are made of solid aluminum alloy. **Latin Percussion, Inc., 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026.**

Yamaha/Steve Gadd Poster

Steve Gadd and Yamaha's Maple Custom drums with the YESS mounting system are the subject of a new poster. To receive a copy, send \$4.00 for shipping and handling to **Steve Gadd Poster, Yamaha Corp. of America, Band & Orchestral Division, P.O. Box 899, Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899.**

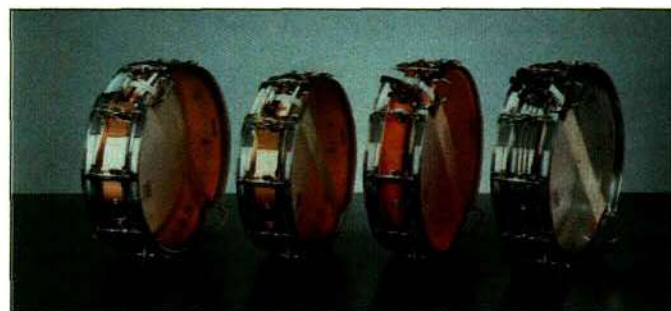
Sapphire Free-Standing Electronic Kick Drum



Sapphire Percussions have introduced their new electronic kick drum, which the makers claim contains no wood or plastic parts. The drum is machined from aluminum, uses parts from the Switchcraft and Gibraltar companies, and features spikes that are screwed from the top to prevent slipping and a height-adjustable stain-

less-steel shaft. The unit's "drumhead" is made from a sponge-like rubber that Sapphire says is very durable. The unit is available in red, black, blue, white, and chrome. **Sapphire Percussions, 272 Main St., Suite 5B, Acton, MA 01720, tel/fax: (508) 263-8677.**

Mapex Piccolo Snare Drums



Mapex offers a full line of piccolo snare drums available in solid steel, maple, or brass and in 3 1/2x13 and 3 1/2x14 sizes. The drums feature tubular lugs that touch the shells at only one point, a "smooth-action" throw-off with a fine-tuning adjustment, and reinforced power hoops. **Mapex, c/o Gibson USA, 1818 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210.**

Thunder Drums

Thunder Drums are hand-made hoop drums made from American red oak wood and genuine rawhide. Each hoop is made from a single band of wood, and no "cheap" laminates or

plastics are used. The drums feature wrapped leather or wooden handles and come with a mallet made of solid oak and suede. Among the models available are plains drums, Earth drums (with floor stands), Alaskan fire drums, Irish bodhrans, and tar drums. Custom drums are also available. **Thunder Drums, Box 551, Willits, CA 95490, (707) 984-8130.**

Mighty Mouth PA System



Jamm Electronics' *Mighty Mouth* is a rehearsal/performance PA system developed for the beginning musical group who can't afford a proper PA, though the makers say it can also be used by advanced players for other uses. By using the *Mighty Mouth* with headphones, Jamm claims you can attain studio-quality

vocals with no feedback. When connected to a guitar amplifier, it can be used as a four-channel PA with little or no feedback. It can also be connected to a four-track recorder to put any combination of four instruments and/or vocals on one track, or to allow four musicians or singers to hear what is being recorded as it happens. **Jamm Electronics, P.O. Box 7040, Newburgh, NY 12550, (914) 895-1606 or 566-1843.**

Beginner Drum Video From Backstage Pass

Backstage Pass has recently released *Play Drums Now!*, a sixty-minute video for beginning drummers. Topics include setting up, proper grip, hand exercises, rudiments, fills, and trading fours. The tape, which is available in English and Spanish versions, is hosted by drum teacher Rick Petrie, who also hosts a cable TV show called *Inside Drums*. **Backstage Pass Productions, Inc., 6930 Valjean Ave., Suite 202, Van Nuys, CA 91406, tel: (818) 786-2222, fax: (818) 786-5550.**

Sonor Reissues Steel Snare

Sonor have reintroduced their *D500* metal snare drum. The drum is made from an 8mm-thick, 5x14 seamless shell of ferromanganese steel, and offers a "funky sound reminiscent of the '60s and '70s soul/R&B era," according to the makers. The drum also features die-cast hoops, 24-strand stainless-steel snares, and Sonor's *Snap-Lock* system to prevent loosening of tension rods. Sonor says that the *D500* bridges the gap between their 4x14 *D420* piccolo and their 6 1/2x14 *D506* snare drum. **HSS, Inc., P.O. Box 9167, Richmond, VA 23227.**

Roc-N-Soc Offers Flex-A-Grip Exerciser

Roc-N-Soc is now offering the Finger Fitness *Flex-A-Grip* exercising rubber ball, which they state relieves stress and fatigue by relaxing tense muscles and tendons. **Roc-N-Soc, 2511 Asheville Road, Waynesville, NC 28787, tel: (704) 452-1736, fax: (704) 452-1732.**

TimeStream Visual Conductor

TimeStream Technologies have introduced their *Visual Conductor*, a MIDI device that visually simulates the baton movements of an orchestra conductor. According to the makers, the *Visual Conductor* "anticipates" each musical beat and traces a baton pattern via flashing lights for the player to follow. The unit follows fluctuations in tempo generated by any MIDI sequencer, drum machine, or computer sequencing programmer. Virtually all time signatures are supported, and the user can customize patterns if desired. Multiple time signatures can also be programmed within one musical piece. **TimeStream Technologies, Inc., 318 Marlboro Road, Englewood, NJ 07631, Tel: (212) 724-1794 or (201) 567-1343, fax: (212) 724-1794.**



Hugo Pinksterboer

Investigating The World Of Cymbals

■ by Adam Budofsky

It's true, there's been a book published on just about every conceivable drumming topic. But before the publication of Hugo Pinksterboer's new 212-page tome, *The Cymbal Book*, none had come close to approaching a comprehensive view on that timeless instrument crucial to every drummer's sound, the cymbal. With its host of color photos, exhaustive historical information, dozens of playing and cleaning tips and professional-player setups, in-depth descriptions of the various types of cymbals, and user-friendly analyses of the physics of cymbal sounds, *The Cymbal Book* guaranteed itself to be of value to anyone the least bit interested in things percussive—especially the drumset player.

As an editor/writer/reviewer for the past ten years at Dutch drumming magazine *Slagwerkkraant*, Hugo Pinksterboer has done several hundred product reviews and many feature stories. He even put together a book-length consumer's guide for drummers on drumsets. But when his editor, Erk Willemsen, suggested doing the same thing for cymbals, Hugo remembers thinking, "What can you write about *cymbals*?! Not too much." But these instruments have always fascinated me," Hugo recalls, "so I started working on it. Well, soon it turned out to be a bigger book than the drum book."

This was in 1985. Soon Hugo felt that he had gathered so much information about cymbals that he wanted to distribute his book beyond Holland. "After all, there are only fifteen million people there," says Hugo. "So I talked to Colin Schofield from Zildjian about the idea, and he said, 'If you want to do that, you have to come and see our factory, because otherwise you understand nothing.' So everything was arranged. I went to see Zildjian and I learned a lot."

In order to keep his project objective, Hugo decided to visit the factories of Paiste, UFIP, Istanbul, Meinl, and Sabian as well. "There aren't that many smaller companies making cymbals anymore," Hugo explains. "Pearl makes cymbals, and there are Chinese companies and a few small ones in Turkey and Russia. Nobody knows how many there are, though, because it's very difficult to get into some of these countries. So the chapter in the book on companies first deals with the six major ones, then with the companies from the past."

"The more I investigated, the more and more I learned," Pinksterboer continues, "so instead of adding 'a little' to the

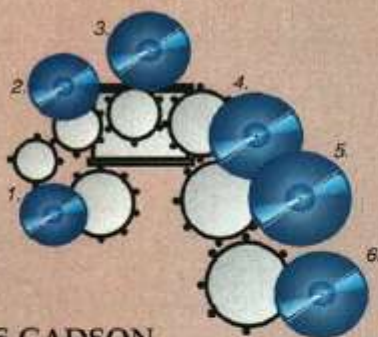


original book—which was about ten pages—I ended up with a final edition that was over *two hundred* pages."

As one might imagine, the research for what would eventually become *The Cymbal Book* was enormous. Besides historical information, Pinksterboer had to process quotes from current drum industry individuals, dozens of drummers' setups, and pages of scientific information from physics experts like Thomas Rossing of the University of Illinois, who has done a lot of important study in the transmission of sound waves.

In order to organize this huge amount of information, Pinksterboer had to come up with a system. "Whenever a new issue of a drummer's magazine came out," Hugo explains, "I put any information on cymbals into a database in my computer. That way I could easily find everything that was ever written about cymbals. The history of the cymbal goes back to before the Bible—actually, way before that. The cymbal is 5,000 years old. In talking about the history of the cymbal, I focused on what happened musically over time and how that affected the cymbal industry—and vice versa."

As Pinksterboer visited the different factories, he found that there were sometimes significant differences in their manufacturing processes. "These factories were in countries with very different cultures," says Hugo, "and the factories were based in some ways on those different cultures. All the companies say, 'We want to make a cymbal that is different, and unique, and outstanding,' though of course you do see some copying. But



JAMES GADSON

"Paiste Cymbals sound like cymbals should sound."

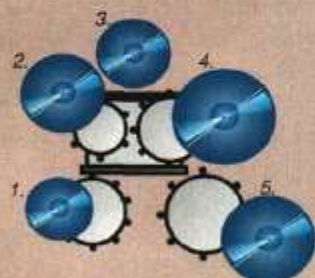
Cymbal Set-Up:

- 1) 14" Paiste Line Dark Crisp Hi-Hat
- 2) 15" Sound Formula Thin Crash
- 3) 18" Sound Formula Full Crash
- 4) 20" Paiste Line Dry Crisp Ride
- 5) 22" Paiste Line Thin China
- 6) 20" 2002 Flat Ride

Favorite recordings

James has played on:

- "I Want You" Marvin Gaye
- "Use Me" Bill Withers
- "Dancin' Machine" The Jacksons
- "Reunited" Peaches & Herb



JOE YUELE

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Cymbal Set-Up:

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- 2) 18" Paiste Line Mellow Crash
- 3) 16" Paiste Line Mellow Crash
- 4) 22" 602 Medium Ride
- 5) 20" 2002 Novo China

Favorite recordings

Joe has played on:

- "A Sense Of Place" John Mayall
- "Chicago Line" John Mayall

Favorite Live Show:

John Mayall at Royal Albert Hall-London, Joe Yuele & Bernard Purdie-Drums

JOEY GOLD

"I've been using Paiste since I was 11 years old and I've never played anything else."

Cymbal Set-Up:

- 1) 15" 3000 Heavy Hi-Hat
- 2) 16" Paiste Line Full Crash
- 3) 16" Paiste Line Thin China
- 4) 12" Paiste Line Splash
- 5) 16" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 6) 18" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 7) 17" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 8) 20" Paiste Line Power Ride
- 9) 22" Paiste Line Heavy China
- 10) 20" Paiste Line Power Crash

Favorite recordings

Joey has played on:

- "Blackout In The Red Room" Love/Hate
- "Wasted In America" Love/Hate

Favorite Tours:

- Love/Hate With AC/DC Tour '90
- Love/Hate With Ozzy Osbourne Tour '92

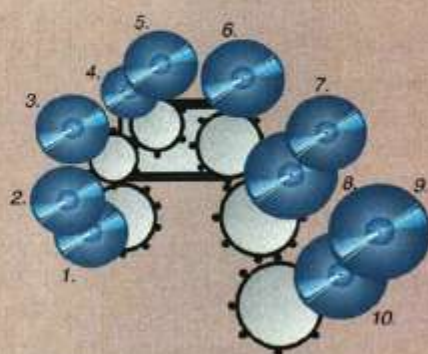


photo: Jack White



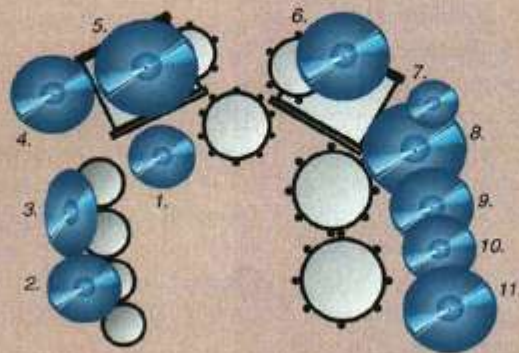
Joey, Bobby, James, Joe

Los Angeles

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Cymbal Set-Up:

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- 2) 16" Paiste Line Full Crash
- 3) 20" 2002 China
- 4) 18" 2002 Heavy Crash
- 5) 22" 2002 Crash
- 6) 20" 2002 Heavy Crash
- 7) 10" Paiste Line Bell
- 8) 22" 2002 Heavy Ride
- 9) 18" 2000 Sound Reflection Power Crash
- 10) 16" 2000 Sound Reflection Power Crash
- 11) 20" 2002 China

Favorite recordings

Bobby has played on:

- "Out Of The Cellar" Ratt
- "Detonator" Ratt
- "Contraband" Contraband

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there are still big differences in some areas. For instance, some companies try to make every cymbal of a particular size and type exactly the same, while others allow for variations. Istanbul would be at one end of that spectrum and Meinl would be at the other. With a recent cymbal line, Zildjian is taking care that every cymbal is heated for the same amount of time and at the same number of degrees, trying to make the instruments more consistent. At Istanbul, they're still putting the cymbals in a stone oven, which is heated by wooden logs, and they put 12", 20", and 24" discs in the same oven at the same time."

Pinksterboer didn't restrict his research to the opinions of the cymbal makers. "I spoke to a lot of people, including drummers," Hugo explains, "asking all kinds of questions about what they do with the cymbals—and not just famous drummers, but the 'drummers in the street.' I wanted to see what they thought."

Sometimes, though, Hugo found that what drummers *think* and what they *do* are two very different things: "Recently I did an inquiry of drummers on what their main considerations were when buying a cymbal. Sound? Volume? Brand name? According to their responses, sound was number one. Brand name, they said, was not really important. Then I asked another question. I said if you could compose a completely new set of cymbals, regardless of the price, what cymbals would your setup consist of? Seventy percent said things like 'all Zildjian Ks,' 'all Paistes,' 'all Sabians'.... It seems it's not socially desirable to say that you're influenced by the brand name, but obviously it is important."

Pinksterboer says that this "drummer on the street" sort of angle was always in the front of his mind while putting *The Cymbal Book* together. "My working title was always 'Cymbals For Drummers,'" Hugo explains. "That's why I included a chapter on composing a setup, with objective tips. But then there are situations where a bandleader says, 'I don't want you to use that cymbal,' and some of those tips might not matter anymore. So what I did was write something about the different *concepts* that there are. To illustrate these, I have all these examples of drummers with their setups. In fact, sometimes there will be two setups—one from five years ago, one from today—so you can see development in that style. Then one drummer might have different setups for different kinds of music that he or she plays. Other drummers might just use one setup for the different kinds of music that they play."

Pinksterboer warns against using the setup information for emulation, but rather for comparative information. "When

choosing cymbals, drummers often rely too much on what they see their playing heroes use," he says. "Some drummers don't realize that the sounds of the cymbals they hear on record have come through all kinds of recording and processing equipment—plus their own stereo system at home. I feel that you shouldn't go for the cymbals that you like on record; go for the cymbal that you hear live.

"The most famous tip on buying cymbals in a store," Pinksterboer continues, "is to bring your cymbals along so you can relate the new sound to the sounds that you know. It's difficult for a person to remember a sound. There are all kinds of tips to picking cymbals. For the book I probably read every article that was written about cymbals over the past fifteen years—more, actually; in my list of sources I've included books from 1933. I collected all the tips that were given in those articles,

and I made a final list. But there's no way to apply that entire list every time you go to buy a cymbal, because it's just too much. If you want to know all the different things you *can* do, though, you can find it in the book."

One might imagine that after all the years of research Pinksterboer spent on *The Cymbal Book*, which obviously involved listening to a *lot* of cymbals, his own tastes may have changed. Ironically, that's not quite the case. "I went into a drumshop once, and I found this cymbal that I fell in love with. So I bought it, and when I took it home and played it, it turned out to be very, very close to a cymbal that I already had. That proved one thing to me: I know what my taste is, because I can repeat it—without having an example. After all the research for this book," Hugo laughs, "I'm very proud to say I still have the same cymbals that I had before."

Pinksterboer adds one last piece of advice, based on his thousands of hours and miles invested in the world of cymbals: "You never should be *looking* for cymbals," he chuckles. "It's like if you start looking for the woman or man you would like to go with, you never find them. It's when you're *not* looking...like that cymbal I just told you about—I wasn't actually looking for a cymbal when I walked into that drumshop."

The Cymbal Book has been catching a lot of attention lately due to its enormous scope and detail. "What I've heard so far from people who've read it is that they're amazed at all the information there is," Pinksterboer says proudly. "It's definitely the highlight of my writing career."

"The history of the cymbal goes back to before the Bible—actually, way before that. The cymbal is 5,000 years old."





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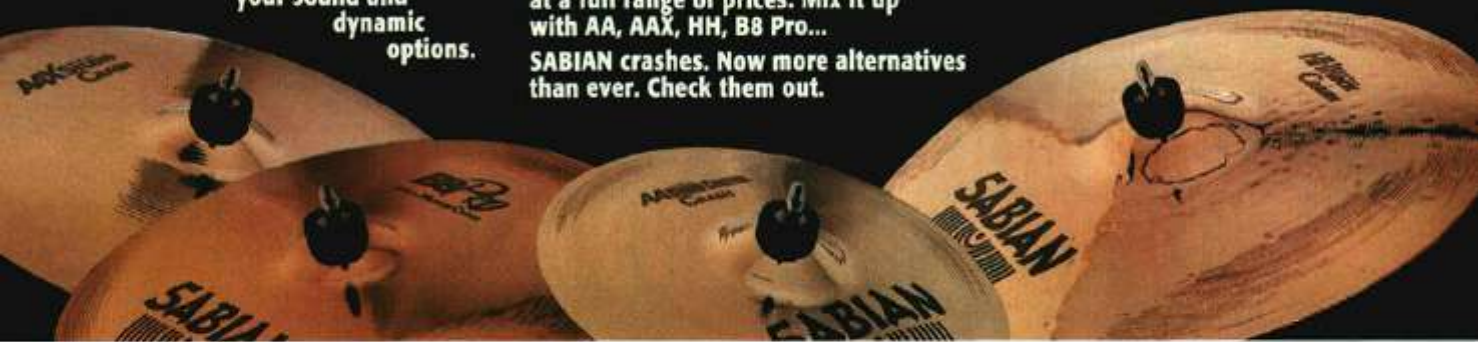
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TIM "HERB" ALEXANDER

continued from page 24

MP: Are you saying you have two playing personas, Tim's and Herb's?

TA: Kind of. Sometimes I'll catch myself describing things I'll do on the drums as kind of "Herbish," maybe cliché for me or things I've played before that kids will ask me about. This guy actually described it to me once while standing in line at the movie theater. He recognized me and came up and asked about this tom and double-bass thing I do—this quick little roll—and how it falls. I wish he'd said something really cool, but he made it sound like a bunch of birds taking off! Well, that's a "Herb" thing, and so is "noodling," just hitting things without thinking about it. It's hard for me to sit at a kit with a bunch of toms and cymbals and not play those types of things. That's definitely a "Herb" thing to do.

MP: You'd told me that the three of you recorded your parts for the new record at the same time, but in different warehouses. How did that affect your playing, not being able to communicate in any way with the other guys?

TA: We did it that way to isolate the sounds better and, actually, I liked recording that way. We could talk to each other through mic's and headphones, but we couldn't see each other, and it made my sense of feeling more alive. Actually, we were all pretty excited to begin with, because we were writing a whole new record ourselves and weren't in a studio renting time. We were in our own rehearsal space just running tape—and two of the songs, "DMV" and "Hamburger Train", came just from jamming, coming up with something cool right at that moment and running the tape.

MP: Was there less pressure doing it that way?

TA: Less pressure during recording, but more pressure just in the whole process of creating it. A lot of the songs are slower than we usually write, which I think is good because I really wanted to do a heavy record; I didn't want to see us lightening up at all. Plus, this is the first record where Larry [Lalonde, guitarist] and I have had a lot of input on the songwriting and the arrangements. I was a little nervous because the old songs had

been proven on the local scene and we knew we could get people into them. This is the first time we all started writing cold, as a group, and we really couldn't tell what it would sound like until we ran the tape. But the performance end of things went pretty smoothly. Les and I had a lot of the structures down, but we didn't put a lot of the guitar parts on until later. We recorded all the instruments at the same time, but the other guys had the freedom to stop. All the drum tracks on the record are from one take—maybe not the first take, but we didn't splice parts in here and there. I'm used to that, though, because the drums are always the first thing to get laid down. I know the parts well enough to go on my own, except for the extended jams. And we like to leave mistakes in there as part of the music; they're all over the new record as little slips and stutters.

MP: There's also so much more depth and clarity to your drums this time.

TA: Well, we've learned a lot since the early days of producing our own records. I wanted the drums to be larger than they've been on any other album. And

ERNATIVES.



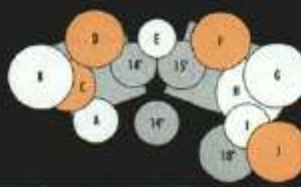
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8" AA Chinese
4" AAX Stage Hi-Hats
8" AA Medium Thin Crash
8" AAX Splash
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0" AAX Splash
8" AA Medium Crash
7" HH Thin Crash
7" HH Rock Ride
2" AA Mini Chinese
0" HH Thin Chinese



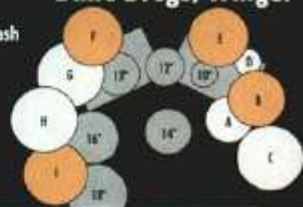
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B 20" AA Chinese
C 16" AA Rock Crash
D 18" AA Rock Crash
E 12" AA Rock Splash
F 18" AA Rock Crash
G 20" AA Chinese
H 22" Powerbell Ride
I 14" AA Rock Hats
J 19" AA Rock Crash



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B 17" AA Medium Thin Crash
C 20" AA Chinese
D 10" AA Splash
E 18" AA Medium Thin Crash
F 18" AA Rock Crash
G 21" AA Dry Ride
H 20" HH Thin Chinese
I 19" AA Medium Crash



actually, the way they sound on tape is kind of like it sounds to be sitting at the kit. It's loud and they ring and we left that ring on the tape. If anybody else was producing it, they would probably have wanted to deaden the sounds. And recording in separate buildings really helped; we got a good sound in our old warehouse.

MP: Did you play the same kit you'd used before?

TA: Yeah, except that I went to 20" bass drums because the 18x18s weren't full enough. I'd been using the 18s to [physically] lower everything above them and bring it all down to a compact level. My thinking was that the snare drum is naturally in a perfect spot—I can do anything on it that I'm capable of playing—but as soon as I move somewhere else, it's uncomfortable. Things get stretched out and they're at different angles. I wanted to move the kit to a similar position as the snare so I could bust things out really quick. But it didn't work because it was a new kit and I wasn't comfortable with it. I'd just received it about four days before doing the last record, *Sailing The Seas Of Cheese*, and I got my cymbals about two days before recording. It was ridiculous trying to get everything set up. All the drums were there, but the rack was all in pieces, there were a million parts, and I didn't know where to begin! It took a while, and that's probably why I didn't do as much on *Cheese* as I normally would have; I just didn't feel comfortable. Looking back, it was probably a dumb thing to record under those circumstances. But there were a lot of pressures: We were on the road and we had to get the record done. The same thing happened with Les, because he'd just gotten a new six-string bass, and

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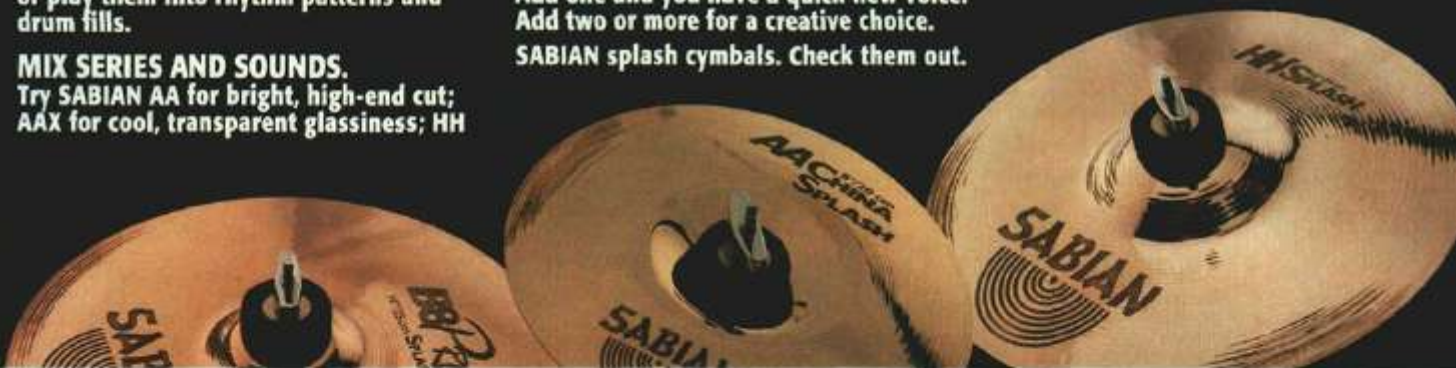
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that's probably a lot of the reason why the new record sounds heavier and deeper. His other bass was very "mid-range," and it got into my frequencies. His new bass has a lot more low-end and it doesn't obstruct the drums.

MP: Does re-positioning your drums affect your technique?

TA: Dave Weckl talked about this in one of his videos, and I kind of adopted his theory. If the drum is too high, you're cutting your stroke short. If it's too low, you're past the maximum point of impact. There's a spot where the arm is almost parallel to the ground and the elbow is in, where you're relaxed and get the most out of your stroke. I don't like to raise my hand or arm, but my kit's creeping up and it's making me raise my arm more and more. That was my theory behind this kit when I first got it, to have the 18" kicks to keep everything low and make my movements more efficient. I also wanted to get more punch and less boom out of my kicks, and I'm still getting that with the 20s. But to hit the center of the drum, even on a 20", the beater has to be lowered, which means the stroke is going to be shorter, and it doesn't feel right to me. On a 22", the beater has a bit more distance to travel, and it allows me to push further. I stomp on the bass drum, not to try to hit harder, but because I'm aggressive with it. That's why I'll probably end up going back to maybe one 22" kick and using a double-pedal and bringing in the other drums tighter around me. Hopefully, that'll accomplish everything I want with my sound and the efficiency of movement.

MP: What first got you into playing drums?

TA: I remember being in the fifth grade, coming home from school, and playing *Elvis Live At Madison Square Garden* on

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my mom's big eight-track player. I'd set up a couple of kitchen chairs around the couch and play the whole concert, and I could get the different sounds, just with my hands. I had a couple of toy kits around that time, and I finally got a real drumset. I remember trying to cop Jeff Porcaro's bass drum part to "Hold The Line." I did a lot of air-drumming at that time, too, and I still think air-drumming is a great thing. Today, I still get the urge to hole up in a room, turn out the lights, and air-drum to Rush. It reminds me of the days I used to sweat and get blisters, air-drumming to *2112*, *Signals*, or *Moving Pictures*. And after all those years of just messing around, my friend played me Rush, and once I heard "Spirit Of Radio," I was hooked. I played sports in school: football and track, but I always came home and air-drummed to Rush, to the point where there was no other music in my life except that!

Neil was such a huge influence on me, but it made me go too much in one direction. Some kid at school would play "Roxanne" from the Police, and I'd just turn my nose up at it because it didn't have any crazy drum fills or odd times. That was a problem with me, not getting into stuff like Peter Gabriel or the Police until later. I got into them gradually and naturally, and Stewart Copeland became a huge influence on me, too—when I was able to *let* him be one. Kids should realize that it's all right for them to be into their own thing now and not force themselves to listen to anything they don't want to. Hopefully, down the road when they get older, they'll open up to other things.

MP: Have you always played in bands that leaned toward pro-

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gressive rock?

TA: Aside from the guys I played Rush covers with in Michigan, the only other real band I've played in was this group called Major Lingo. I played with them for six years while I lived in Arizona, up until I moved here. We wrote a lot of tunes, which was actually the best thing playing-wise and learning-wise, because the music was just all over the place. A lot of the music I have in my collection I got from hanging with Tony, our slide-guitarist, and listening to his stuff. It's all weird and I wouldn't know where to even begin looking for most of it. And that really affected my playing because it turned me on to music from all different parts of the world. Now listening to that kind of ethnic and cultural variety has become such a huge thing in my life. I hang out in the international section more than I do in the rock section at record stores.

Major Lingo was a very vocal-oriented group, with two singers, and we did a lot of Irish folk tunes, which kind of gave birth to the playing style I have now with Primus. It was very experimental and challenging. We were doing Afro-reggae-ska, and nobody liked us!

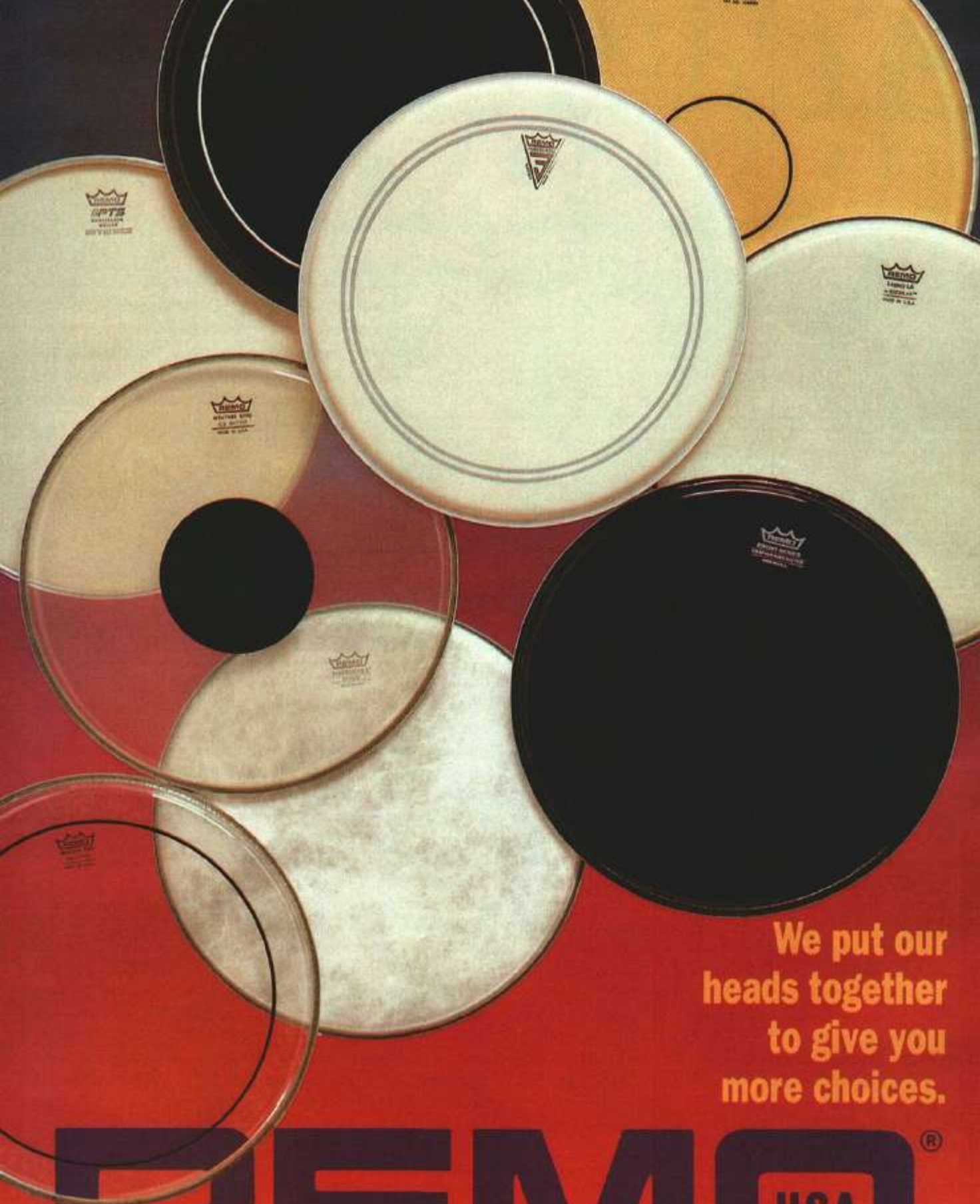
MP: How did you develop the skill to play in such an eclectic band? Did it come from lessons?

TA: I actually shied away from lessons when I was younger because I was kind of afraid they'd change me. I didn't want to do things that I wasn't into doing. When I got to Arizona, I took a few lessons. But the best lessons came from Atma Anure, who I'd seen at a Drum World clinic. I thought we'd sit at the drums and he'd show me some cool stuff. But all he did—and this

bummed me out at the time—was just show me how to hold my sticks a little bit differently and use my fingers, little things that ended up making a *big* difference. When I play, I kind of use this whipping motion, a loose wrist up until impact. You don't get speed from being tense; you get speed and power from being relaxed. It's the same kind of technique used in the martial arts, which I've dabbled in over the years, and I never forget it when I play drums.

MP: Was your style kind of ragged before that?

TA: I don't think I *had* a style. In fact, after I left Michigan, I didn't play drums for three years. My mom and I had moved out to Arizona with my step-dad, but he ended up leaving, so it was just me and my mom in this apartment. Life was really kind of hard, and then she ended up going back to Michigan. It was a weird time and I was very close to going into the Navy, because I wasn't playing drums. I was about eighteen or nineteen and I didn't know what I was going to do with my life. So I checked out the Navy and I went to go through the nuclear program, which requires you to take two tests. I took the first one and did fine, but the second one was more technical and I missed passing by one point. They said I had to wait three months before I could take it again. So during the next three months, something must have hit me because I asked myself, "What the hell am I doing? I am *this* close to spending six years on an aircraft carrier learning about nuclear power." At that time, I literally had no money, and the idea of joining the Navy, getting out someday, and making a couple hundred-thousand dollars working at a nuclear power plant seemed to be the answer. And if I'd gotten



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just one more point on that test, that's where I'd probably be now; I certainly wouldn't be in Primus.

MP: What happened next?

TA: Well, my guitar-player friend from Michigan, Jamie Ibarra, came out to Arizona and got me into playing again. But he ended up leaving and I was back at square-one, again with no job, no money. I wasn't doing anything; I couldn't even get a job at McDonald's! I'd been saving that as my last-resort job, so I got dressed up and took a bus down for the interview and thought I'd get that job for sure.... I never heard from them again. I was like, "Oh my God, *McDonald's* won't hire me!"

My mom was the person who got my life turned around. One day she just said, "Why don't you look in the yellow pages and see if any recording studios need a drummer?" I just kind of laughed, like that would really work! But the second studio I called was having auditions, so I went thinking I'd be doing commercials and all this neat stuff. I ended up sounding like Neil at the audition, doing all these weird beats and fills, and it wasn't what they wanted. But there was a guy there who knew a band that was looking for a drummer. He asked me if I knew what ska was, and I said sure, though I really had no idea. So I called the band and it turned out that ska was kind of what the Police were doing—this upbeat, reggae feel. I packed up my little five-piece kit that I'd had forever into pillow cases and put the bass drum in this taped-up cardboard box, and I got on a bus to Flagstaff. My girlfriend's dad was then going to drive me to this ghost town called Jerome, where the band was located. It probably looked like I was moving in, but the band liked me. And that's how I joined Major Lingo.

MP: Did the band play a lot?

TA: We ended up playing every weekend for five years. We'd do out-of-town trips every now and then, and this girl who was a fan of the band got us to come up here to the Bay Area, where we did some shows. We did that another time and decided to just move the whole band here. It was kind of rough for a while. I ended up getting a job at that cafe, the Edible Complex, and I rode my bike to work because we only had a group van for

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the band. We gigged a little, but it really wasn't enough to live on. The other guys wanted to go back to Arizona. Meanwhile, the friend of mine, Jason, who was working with me, popped on a tape Primus had made called *Sausage*. It had "John The Fisherman," "Frizzle Fry," "Groundhog's Day," and a couple other songs. The drummer [Jay Lane] was really happening, playing cool stuff in a style I hadn't heard in a long time. Jason said the drummer was going to be leaving and I told him I was interested. I eventually auditioned with Les and the original guitarist, Todd Huth, who left just after that.

I ended up playing in both bands for about six months. I went to Arizona every three weeks and played with Major Lingo and then came back and did gigs with both bands. When Major Lingo decided to go home for good, I decided to stay and take a chance with Primus. We recorded our first record a month later. We ended up doing a small tour, just six people in an RV, but we met some really cool people on the road, like Soundgarden. All the touring and the press have really gotten us to where we are now.

MP: The tour you did with Rush in '91 was a big breakthrough for the group. I know from the standpoint of the audience it seemed like a really good mix.

TA: I hope it did, but I know we were all really nervous about meeting Rush, because we're all huge, longtime fans. We were totally excited when we found out the tour was really going to happen. Anyway, it took a while to get to know them, because we didn't know what to say or do. But it got to the point where we'd go out to dinner with them and then we'd all get together in the

dressing room and just play, every night. We'd go backstage and play gongs on a little practice set I had, little cans, a flute, a guitar—anything that made noise—and I videotaped a lot of it. And I'd sit there thinking that if I went back to when I was thirteen and knew what I'd be doing now, I'd be absolutely shittin'!

One time in Paris, Rush was getting ready to sound-check, but Neil wasn't there yet. So Les comes up to me and says, "Herb, they want you to check the drums." I went up there and Alex and Geddy were sitting there with their guitars on and I was like, "Oh shit, I'm gonna be in Rush for a minute!" As much as I know their songs, I didn't really know what to do. But I found one of the pads that triggered the horns and I started playing the beat to "Roll The Bones." Geddy and Alex joined in, and then Neil shows up and sees me playing *his* song on *his* kit. I was literally shaking because it was such a big deal to me. But Neil was really cool about it. We all became pretty good friends, and when we came through Canada on the U2 tour, Alex and Geddy came to the show and we spent the night at Alex's house.

MP: I'm not surprised that you're such big fans of Rush, because I look at Primus as kind of a younger, twisted version of that band. And your playing style is very similar to Neil's.

TA: I've picked up a lot of ideas from him. One of the things I appreciate most about him is that the things he does are *his*; you know it's him playing. Neil composes on the drums. I've picked up a lot of ideas from him in the sense of the songs having structures—up points and down points. But one thing I learned from the tour with him is that his parts—studio and live—are the same, every night. And when I watched that, I asked myself

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whether or not I wanted to tie myself down like that. Neil seems to work it out so well before he records that it's possibly the best thing he could have played for that song. I also have things in songs that I always do the same, but I don't sit there and try to make my part permanent when I'm recording. I'd wondered at times in the past whether I wanted to have more permanency with what I played. But watching Neil showed me the approach you have to take to continually do that, and I learned that that's Neil; it's *his* thing and I don't think I could be like that.

MP: I've been meaning to ask you where your nickname came from. I'm sure you've been asked about it a lot.

TA: People have invented stories about it, I guess, [laughs] But it started when I first joined the band. One of the old drummers in the band was named Tim, and to keep everybody from getting confused, I got stuck with "Herb" because I take natural herbs. That also helped keep other people from thinking I was the first Tim, and the name just stuck. There were quite a few Primus drummers before me—Tim Wright, Jay Lane, Peter Libby...those are the ones I'm aware of, but I think there's a couple more. Primus just started getting a following going in the clubs when Larry and I joined.

MP: You're involved with several projects right now. Where do they all fit in around your commitment to Primus?

TA: I like playing too much, I think, to ever really restrict myself to one position. Some musicians feel they can get everything out of their systems playing with one group of musicians. That's not the case with me because I give myself certain standards and restrictions in Primus. The thing is, it's very easy for me to just

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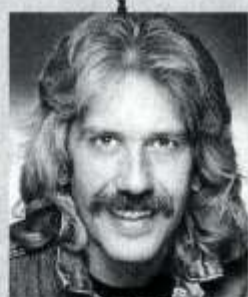
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start going off, doing my own thing musically. I can't really do that in Primus, whereas my other groups are based on the idea of playing whatever you want. Almost all the other songs in my other projects are based on playing things we haven't played before, time-wise or feel-wise. That's not to say we don't do that in Primus, but it just keeps me sharp to play with different musicians.

I want to do other things while I'm still young, like working on the movie *Chalk*. I've always tinkered around with other instruments, so I told Rob Nilsson that I wanted to take a shot at doing the soundtrack. He agreed, and he also gave me a part in the film. The acting is what's new and hard for me. Fortunately Rob is into improvisation, and the script is more of a guideline to go by than something we have to stick to. And the stuff I'm learning through an acting workshop I'm taking is more personal stuff, things I need to deal with on my own—a good learning experience.

But Primus is the main gig for me, and I think this band is tighter now than it's ever been. Until now, I've kind of felt like the outsider looking in. But now we're all learning and changing as a band. And it's great to keep playing music that drives me and inspires me.



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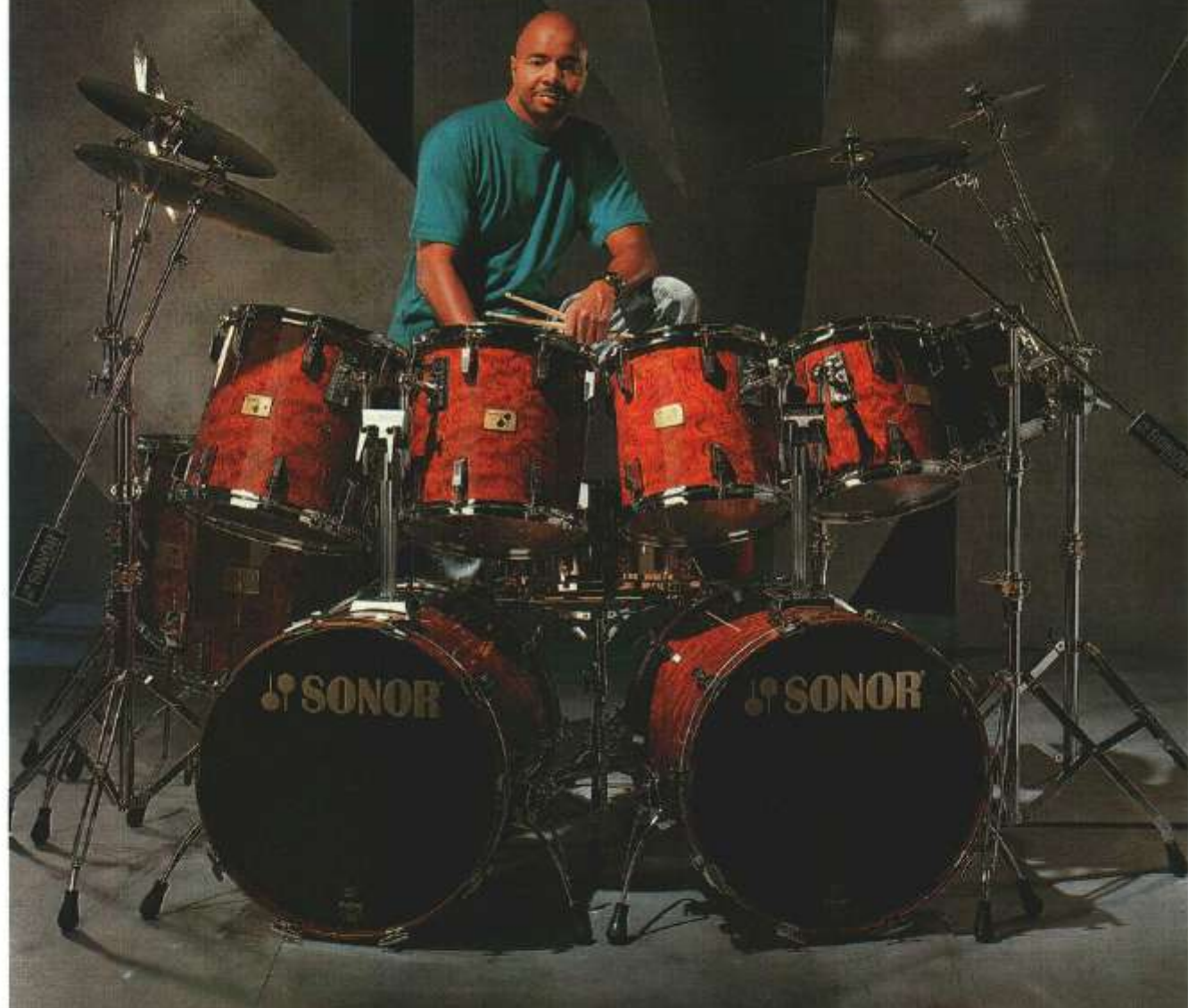
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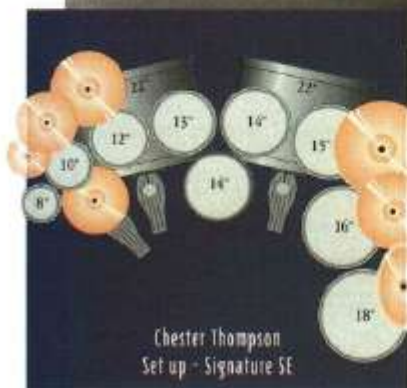
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Ginger Russell
Danville CA

Though I do feel that the editor's response was a very well-stated one, there are three quick points that I would like to add. First: Aside from the few female drummers who I was aware of when I started playing (Jody Linscot, Terry Lyne Carrington, and Sheila E.), *Modern Drummer* was, and has been, my sole source for information concerning female drummers and percussionists. I can assure you that without *MD* a very large percentage of the female drum community would undoubtedly go unnoticed. Second: When the Tama drum company approached me last year to do an ad, they asked me to come up with an idea and setting that had to do with an element of my life, but excluding drums and music. What you see is a very true representation of just that. My Harley Davidson motorcycle happens to play a big part in my life, as well as do two of the people around me in the photo—my brother and my girlfriend (not a rent-a-babe). Third: What

can I say about Bobby Rock? If anyone should be offended by his ad, I wouldn't have expected it to be a woman, but rather a skin-and-bones drummer like myself who wished he had even 1% of the muscle on Mr. Rock's body.

Thank you for your time. I feel much better now.

Jonathan Mover
New York NY

I could tell by your opening paragraph that you were disturbed by the letter from Ms. Schwartz. Her letter was evidently composed while feeling strong emotion, and your response was written while under the same influence. It was reactive (defensive) instead of proactive (visionary), which the situation seemed to call for.

I am a woman drummer and a feminist, but I am not offended by the pictures and ads of men playing drums—even if they sweat. I do also. In looking at the problem objectively, I believe a few solutions to the "sexism" charges could include: (1) instituting a monthly article directed specifically to women drummers, written by a woman, and covering such topics as equipment best suited for women, how to deal with sexual discrimination in the music industry, and women who have broken the "glass ceiling" to become accomplished drummers. (2) Using only tasteful ads focusing on drums and drumming—not on scantily clad women draped over the item they are advertising. I appreciate the fact that, for the most part, *MD* does not run such ads. However, the "sexy nun" in the PADL ad on page 59 of your June issue is offensive to women, Roman Catholics, and, I would imagine, to nuns.

Laura Holstin
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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

continued from page 16

sounds using a Roland footswitch (commonly used as a start-stop switch on drum machines) plugged into an SPD-8. Before I bought the SPD-8, I played my kick pad with a conventional pedal—and my foot speed was a little below average. When I bought the SPD-8 three years ago and started using the footswitch to trigger the sounds, my speed increased considerably.

The problem is, I sometimes have to go back to playing a conventional kick pedal—especially if I sit in with a group on someone else's kit. After three years of using the footswitch, I can't seem to use a conventional pedal. In fact, it seems as if my speed has gotten worse than it was before. The people I play with have come to expect a certain level of speed from me when I play, but I can't do it if I'm not on my own kit. What do I do?

Toby Derima
St. Croix, Virgin Islands

A Your best bet would be to get a bass drum practice pad and a conventional pedal of your choice, and practice regularly with them. If you normally (and frequently) play with your electronic setup, then you'll still get plenty of practice on it and your "electronic pedal" technique won't suffer. But you'll certainly improve your "acoustic pedal" technique, and have it ready in addition for those occasions when you need to use it.

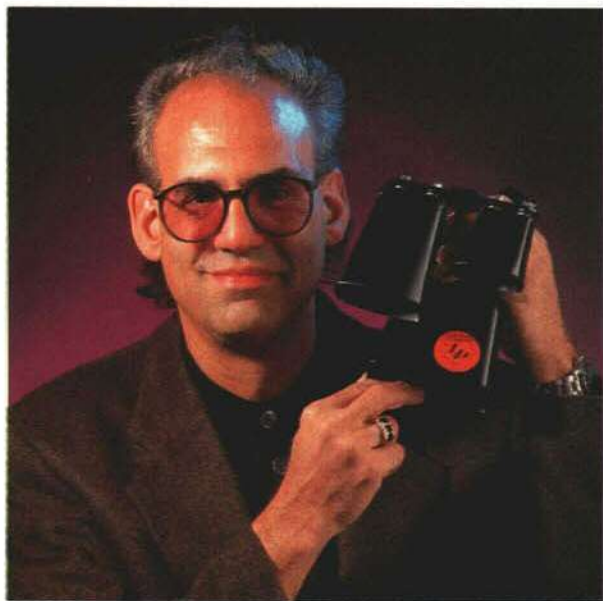
CLEANING YAMAHA DRUMS

Q Can you please advise me on how to keep the finish on my Yamaha Recording Custom set looking new? Even by using a soft cloth, I still create fine scratches on the top surface. I assume this is a clear top coat. If so, what do you recommend as a cleaner or buffer, and what (if anything) might take out these light scratches?

Bill Lowe
Charlottesville VA

A Steve Ettleson, of Yamaha drums, and Pork Pie Percussion's Bill Detamore, who does custom tech work for many L.A.-based drummers, both recommend *Windex* as a safe and easy-to-use cleaner. Bill stipulates that you must use a soft, 100%-cotton cloth, because any man-made fiber will scratch the surface of the finish. (For further instructions, see Bill's *Shop Talk* article in last month's issue.)

You're correct about the surface being a top coat of lacquer. Unfortunately, no home product or method is really satisfactory for removing the fine scratches that normal wear and tear will put on this top coat. Buffers and polishes are likely to go right through this layer, and possibly even into the surface of the wood itself. Your best bet is to keep the surface as clean and dust-free as possible, to prevent further scratching.



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Miking Your Drums

by John Pokrandt

Acoustic drums on professionally recorded albums always sound deep, full, and natural. So why do your drums always end up sounding so artificial on tape? Most likely because you've been trying too hard to modify your drum sound before it even hits the microphone.

I've been working with this problem for three years. In my opinion, the secret is to capture the natural sound of your drums first, and then modify the sound with noise gates and other effects.

Natural Acoustic Sound

To optimize the natural sound of your acoustic drums, the top and bottom heads must be in tune with each other and free of mutes and dampeners. If either the top or bottom head is out of tune, the drum won't decay naturally. Even when tuned properly, the decay of some drums will last longer than that of others—but don't worry, because this can be controlled electronically later.

However, if you attempt to control this decay with mutes, dampeners, or duct tape and patches, the natural crisp attack of the drum may be lost. Snare drums especially may end up sounding boxy or tubby. (Bass drums are treated a little differently. An old pillow that just slightly dampens both heads at the same time will allow the drum to produce a deep, full, natural sound.)

Once you have your drums tuned up and free of dampeners, the sound can be modified electronically. For instance, the decay of the drum can be shortened with a noise gate. Since the drums are not physically dampened, the attack will remain crisp, and the deep, full, natural sound will still be present. A reverb unit can be used along with the noise gate to further fill out the drum sound if it is too dry.

Types Of Microphones

It's very important to use the right microphone to mike each type of drum. The snare drum is one of the toughest to mike. I have found that using two microphones—one on top and one on the bottom—usually works the best.

The Shure *SM57* unidirectional mic' works well for snare drums. Try different levels of delay and reverb with each of the two mic's until you find a sound you're satisfied with. The *SM57* also works well for miking the high and mid rack toms. For the lower rack toms and floor toms, a mic' with lower frequency response—such as the AKG *D80*—will produce a rich, deep sound without losing the crispness of the initial attack. The AKG *D112*

makes an excellent bass drum mic' because it can handle the high sound pressure of this drum. Keep in mind, though, that these specific mic's are my personal choices. By all means, seek the advice of qualified pro sound sales people regarding alternative mic' models and brands.

Placement Of Microphones

A general rule of thumb that applies to snare drums, rack toms, and floor toms is to place the mic' between $\frac{3}{4}$ " and 1" off of the top head. (See figure 1.) Also place the mic' about one-tenth of the particular drum's diameter away from the rim towards the center. (See figure 2.) For example, if the drum is 10" in diameter, place the mic' between $\frac{3}{4}$ " and 1" off the top head and 1" away from the rim towards the center.

For miking bass drums, I suggest cutting a hole in the front head no larger than 8" in diameter. Place the mic' either just outside the hole, or inside the drum about 2" away from the batter head. A mic' placed just outside the hole will generally produce a dry, punchy sound without a crisp attack, while a mic' located inside the drum will capture the very low frequencies of the drum and the attack of the beater hitting the head. It will probably be necessary to trim the gain of the bass drum mic' since it will produce such a strong signal.

Things To Remember

There are four main things to keep in mind when miking acoustic drums. First, allow the drumheads to resonate freely; don't muffle them with dampeners and mutes. Second, the top and bottom heads of each drum must be in tune with each other. Third, use the right microphone for the drum being miked. And finally, placement of the mic's must *always* be taken into consideration.

Figure 1

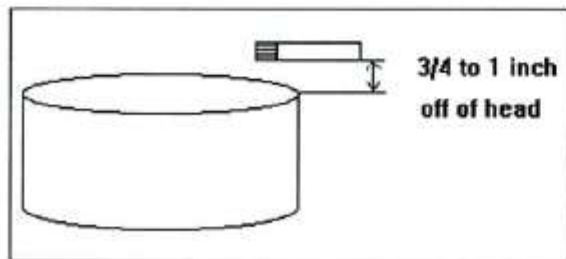
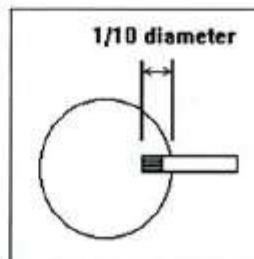


Figure 2



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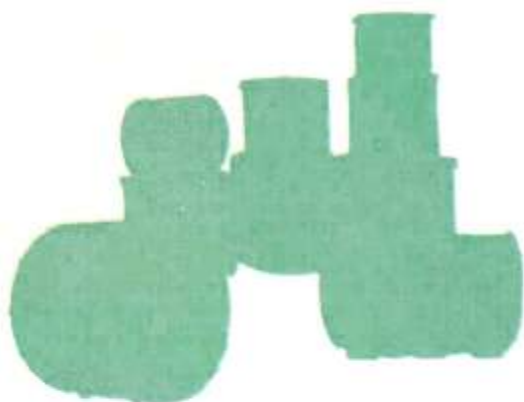
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CLAYTON CAMERON

continued from page 29

tional grip. Have you always played traditional grip, and more importantly, which is better for brushes, traditional or matched?

CC: When I started I learned traditional grip, and I've stuck with it ever since. When I was in college, I can remember some guys calling me "dated" because I wouldn't switch to matched grip. But to me, the bottom line is the *sound*. It doesn't matter how you do it, just get the sound.

I feel the same way about what grip is best for brushes. It doesn't matter as long as you get the sound. Try to imagine the brushes moving by themselves in a pattern, without the hands being there. It's pretty clear, at least to me, that your hands could be in either grip.

WFM: With all of this effort you've put into becoming a great brush player, do you think it's helped your overall drumming ability?

CC: Well, I think with a lot of guys, their dynamic range starts at about *mezzoforte* and goes up. I like playing soft. I suppose I'm a bit more sensitive on the drums than drummers who haven't spent time with brushes. And that might be why I've had the opportunity to play with some fantastic singers—Sammy, Frank Sinatra, Billy Eckstine, Eartha Kitt, Joe Williams, and now Tony Bennett.

One thing I want to mention, though, is that I do like to play more aggressive types of music. I was giving a clinic a few months back, and somebody actually asked me if I ever use sticks! I'm glad to be known as a brush player, but man, I like sticks, *too*. [laughs] But getting back to your question, I think that concentrating on brushes does add to my overall ability as a drummer.

WFM: You've gotten to a point now where Calato is manufacturing a brush to your design. What is it about your model that you like?

CC: I did a session for Billy Childs' third album, and there was a tune on there called "Jazzmania." Part of the tune has a Latin section, and right in the middle of the tune there's a weird section, where I wanted to be able to play the toms. Well, the brushes I had at the time had the end-piece of the push-rod sticking out,

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Marie San-Fillippo-(Zildjian), Owen Goldman,
Bobby Gabriel, Ralph Razzo, Gary Ballard-
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Stylist-(Paiste), Andy Megna Rock/Funk Stylist-
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and that just didn't work on the toms. So at that point I realized I wanted a solid surface on the back of a brush for playing other parts of the kit.

My brushes are non-retractable because of the solid shaft, but the length of the wires is just perfect for me. And if you want a wider spread, you can just do it by hand. The shaft has a hard-nylon coating near the butt end, so I can get a nice cross-stick sound with it. Also, I had Calato put a metal rivet on the end of the brush so I can still play cymbal scrapes. This model just feels very solid in my hands, the balance is great, and I'm able to get a lot of sounds off the drums and cymbals with it.

WFM: Speaking of equipment, I was wondering if you set your kit up in a particular way to assist you in playing brushes.

CC: I have a second snare drum set up to the left of my hi-hat. I like to set up different types of grooves by playing with my left hand on my left-side snare and my right on my main snare. The left drum is deeper than the main one, so the combination of sounds really works on certain grooves. Plus it allows me to vary the timbre on simple brush patterns.

As for cymbals, I enjoy using splashes, plus the regular combinations. Also, an important cymbal that all brush players should have is a sizzle cymbal. When you're playing a ballad, you need to have it for that soft, sustaining cushion it gives.

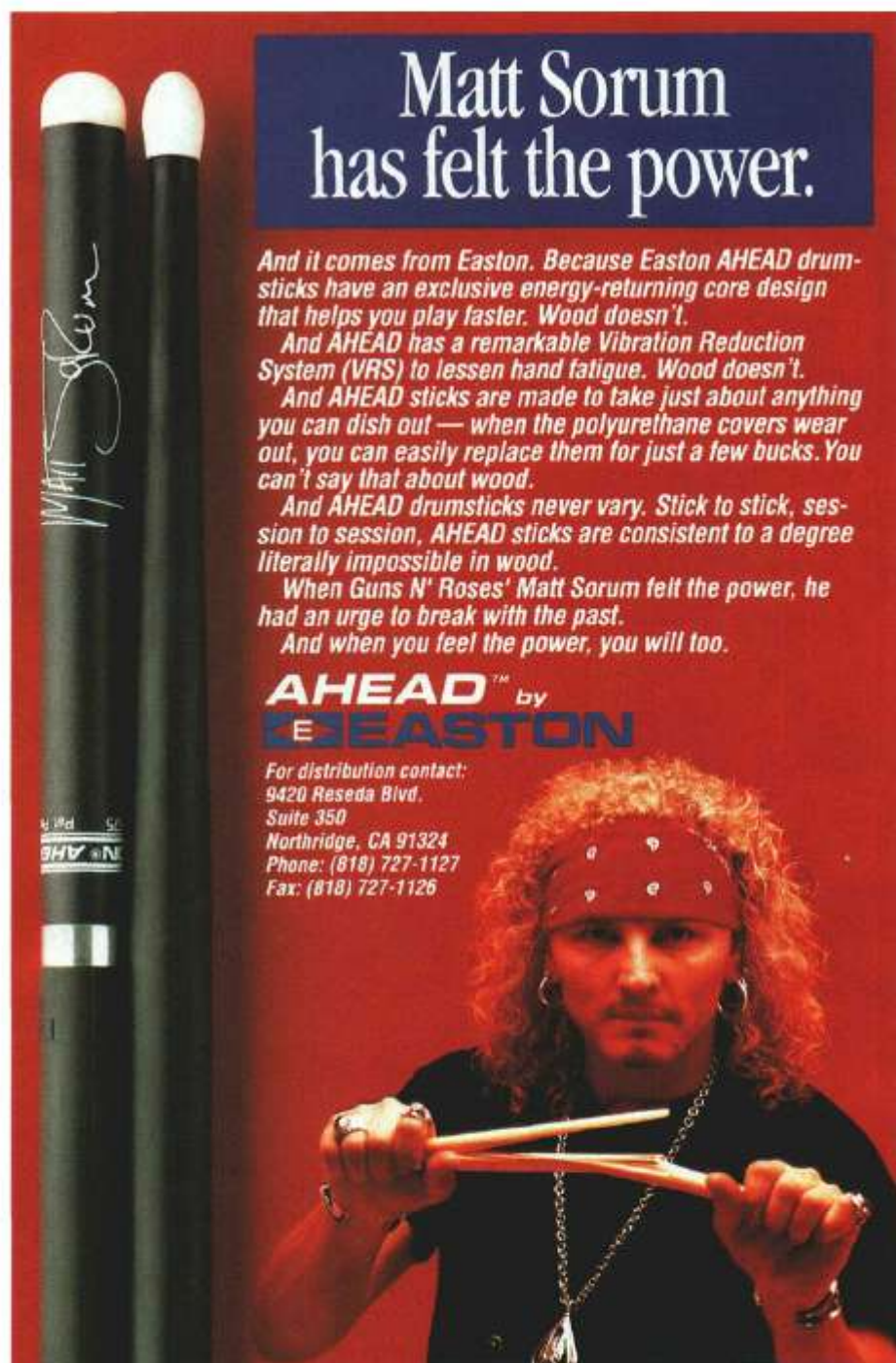
WFM: I'd like to ask you about something I heard you mention in one of your clinics: You talked about how dance was instrumental in shaping how you now play brushes.

CC: When I was with Sammy, we did shows with some of the greatest tap dancers on the planet, including "Sandman" Simms, Arthur Duncan, Bunny Briggs, Harold Nicholas, Gregory Hines, and, of course, Sammy. Each of those guys greatly affected the way I play brushes. The sounds they were able to produce just thrilled me! I honestly believe my style came together from being around those great dancers and hearing their sounds. I felt a connection with what they were doing. Jim Chapin was the first drummer to come up to me and say, "You didn't get those things you do from drummers." And he was dead right. The influence was from tap

dancers.

Just to give you some examples of what they were doing, Sandman, for instance, would come out and sprinkle sand on the floor, and slide on the sand. What a sound! He would do all these hip sweeping sounds. I tried to reproduce the quality of that sound with my brushes. Bunny Briggs is known for tapping with his taps

barely off the floor, getting sort of a rapid-fire effect. I developed my snap accents from that movement. Arthur Duncan was very athletic, and he had a move that looked like a windmill. I incorporated that into some of my flashier strokes. And Gregory Hines is sort of like the Tony Williams of tap dance, taking what had come before and combining it



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into very hip things.

I found a lot of parallels between what they were doing and what I wanted to do with brushes. Every night I would hang with these guys in their dressing rooms asking questions, and I *learned*. I found out that you really had to be good to be a performer. So many musicians and performers today get by on just one thing, and sometimes that one thing is looks. Being around Sammy for seven years, I learned that you have to work at what you do and really get good.

One time we gave a performance in front of 5,000 people, and the power went out. Sammy sang, danced, played drums and piano—he *performed*. And the audience went crazy. If that happened to some artists today, they'd be lost. So that's the kind of background I was lucky enough to catch the tail-end of. Sammy was fantastic. His influence will be with me forever.

WFM: With all of this behind you, what's the next step for you with brushes? What do you work on these days?

CC: Where do I start? [laughs] I'm not really working on any new techniques. Although most drummers are starting to realize what I do, I've been playing brushes a long time now, so the foundation is pretty solid. But one thing I've been working on is applying concepts from other styles to brushes. For instance, David Garibaldi gave me his book, *Future Sounds*, which is pretty cool, and I've been applying it to brushes. In the book David talks about two sound levels, and I've applied those examples by playing the softer level with the brush side of the brush and the loud level with the butt-end of the brush, using a flipping technique I've developed. Using both ends of the brush within patterns is something I've been working on.

The thing I hope to concentrate on in the future is writing music with brushes in mind. I think it's the next logical step—writing music based around grooves and patterns I play with brushes. And not just ballads—I have patterns and techniques that sound like fusion, funk, and Latin. That's where I plan on taking brushes in the future.

WFM: We've talked a lot about brushes, but what about *sticks*? What first motivated you to pick them up?

CC: I grew up in mid-city LA, and there was a photographer who lived next door to my family. He was cleaning out his house and giving some of the stuff to the neighborhood kids. He told me to share the things with the other kids, so I gave it all away except for some bongos he had, which I really wanted for some reason. I used to play those bongos in my backyard

every day—I loved to play them. That's what started me off.

Eventually I started sitting in with a friend of mine's father, a professional musician named Lee Shamburger. He would play congas, and I would jam with him on my bongos. He told my dad that I had some talent, and that I should have a drumset. I never asked my dad for drums,

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but one day he just went out and bought a set for me.

My parents then suggested that I start taking lessons, so I started studying at Grant's Music Center in L.A. with Raymond Pound, who I mentioned earlier. Grant's was a great place for me. You could take lessons there, plus they had different rehearsal bands to play with. I started taking lessons when I was twelve, and for some reason I really got into it. Everything else was sort of put on the back shelf. I remember cats teasing me because I would be sitting around practicing paradiddles all the time. I listened to what my teacher told me to do and just did it.

When I got to be about fifteen, Grant's had a big band, and I would go down and check out some good drummers who would sit in. I remember seeing Billy Higgins play with that band. Every now and then I'd get a chance to play with the band, and that was a great experience for me. I fell on my face many times, having to kick the band, read, *and* swing. But the beauty of it was I was *learning*. I mean, the other musicians got on my case and I hated that, but I was getting some great experience.

The leader of the band, Gil Askey, was the writer and arranger for the Supremes back in the early Motown days. Under Gil's direction I learned a lot about music. He would sit down at the kit, and, not even being a drummer, express to me what the music needed. I was impressed with that. That showed me how important attitude was compared to sheer chops.

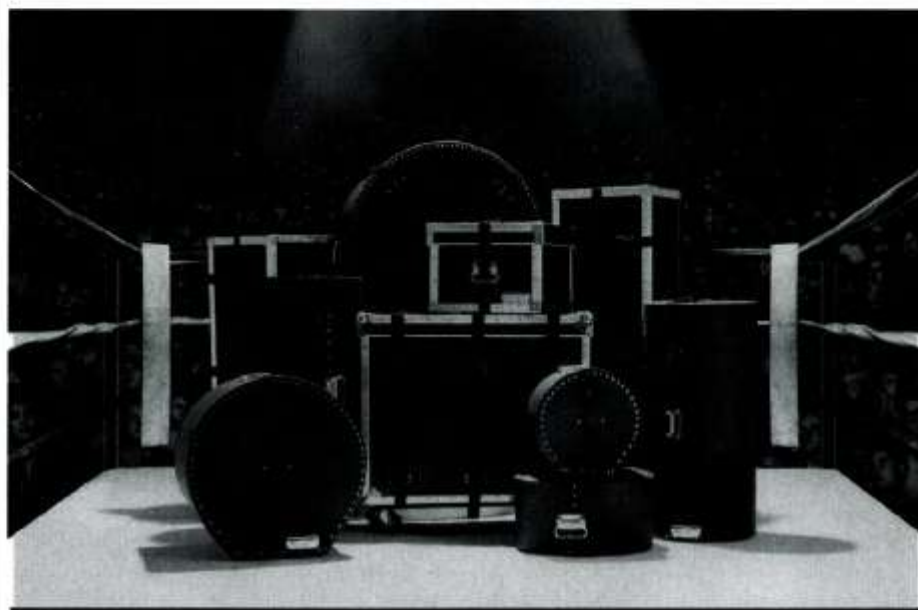
I ended up going to college at Cal State Northridge, and I didn't play in any of the big bands there, but I was able to work *professionally* with the Grant's Music Center band. For most cats, college is the only place to play in that type of situation, but I was very fortunate to get the real heart of it.

At Cal State I met Gerald Wilson, who has done a lot of albums with his big band. He taught a history of jazz class there, and he didn't even know I played drums. I asked him if I could bring a trio to his class to perform, and he was surprised and didn't seem to know I played drums. Once he saw me play, he asked me to record his next album, which was

funny because most people around the school thought I was a legit percussion guy since that's what I was concentrating on. I was mainly doing mallets. So a few people were surprised when they found out how I played.

I think my interest in brushes got more intense while I was at Cal State. After practicing some difficult multi-percus-

sion piece all day, I would turn the light off in the practice room and just play time on the snare drum with brushes. The sound was soothing to me. And I think that's where I got my sweeping together, because I would just sit in that room for hours doing it. I didn't think about the technique, I just listened to the sound.



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WFM: Did you end up graduating from Cal State?

CC: Yes, I do have my music degree, and I'm happy I went to school. And after I graduated I got that gig in Las Vegas I talked about, playing brushes. And it was cool, because at the time it was paying some good money. I stayed there for about a year, and I went back to L.A. from time to time to do some side projects, including another big band album with Gerald Wilson. And the trio I was playing with in Vegas started working with Joe Williams, the great vocalist, which was a thrill because we did some nice gigs, including going back to L.A. and playing the Hollywood Bowl.

WFM: And how did you get the gig with Sammy Davis, Jr.?

CC: When I was in Las Vegas, I would go to all the different shows and check out the acts. The Count Basie Orchestra was performing a special show with Sammy, so I went down to Caesar's Palace and got backstage. I was knocked out by the band and especially by Sammy. After the show I introduced myself to Sammy's orchestra leader, George Rhodes. I told him about

my background, and he was kind enough to listen. And that was the end of that.

Then, about a year later, I heard that George was auditioning drummers for Sammy's show, so I got on the phone and called him. I was really polite and tried to choose my words carefully, and he mentioned that I was already being considered for the gig! It turns out that Sammy's lead trumpet player was sitting in the audience on a night I just happened to be sitting in with Clark Terry at the Four Queens. He mentioned to George that I was okay. So they flew me to Lake Tahoe for the audition, and even though I didn't think it went that well, they seemed to think I could cut the gig. I ended up staying for seven years.

WFM: So when did you start working on your video, *The Living Art Of Brushes*?

CC: I came up with the concept for a video about brushes back in 1987. I thought video would be the best medium to teach brush playing, because it's so important to be able to see the movements of the hands. With a book you can look at diagrams, and with a cassette you can hear what the sounds should be. But

you still can't see the motion of the hands. So when I came up with a concept for the graphic element for the video, I started trying to come up with a way to put the whole project together.

I decided to do the video not because I wanted to have my name on a video, but because I thought it was the best way to demonstrate brushes, to teach brush playing, and to keep the art alive. As I said, after I had the concept, it took me a year to find the right guy who could help me take the concept and get it on video. His name is Cory Ryback. He and I worked on this video for hours and hours, experimenting with camera angles and post-production editing and whatnot. Cory is as much of a perfectionist as I am, so, on the positive side, the video turned out great. But on the negative side, we worked a long time on it. It took months to complete the shooting, because we had to do it when I was off the road with Sammy.

The video opens with me playing a solo on a ddrum, which I call "Brushup." I put that together to get the idea across that brushes are valid *today*. I was inspired in

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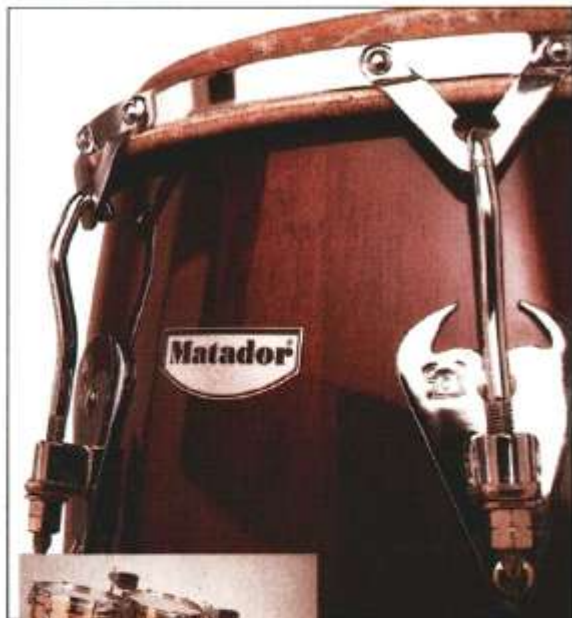


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a way by Sammy to do that, because he knew how to make something hip; he could make it work in a "showbiz" way. In fact, when I was on the "Rat Pack Tour" with Sammy, Dean Martin, and Frank Sinatra, we had a long flight back from Australia. Normally the band didn't travel with the Pack, but this time we did. And I got a chance to talk with Sammy—we affectionately called him "Mr. D"—and he was very supportive. So I felt I had to make brushes contemporary. I got so sick and tired of hearing people say that brushes were a dying art. That's why I called the video *The Living Art Of Brushes*.

WFM: Since the video has come out, a lot of people have become interested in brushes.

CC: I don't want to take sole credit for it, because what I do is built on the shoulders of the great brush players who have come before me. I was very concerned when putting the video together that people might think it was wrong for some young guy to be putting out a brush video. I wanted to get input from the masters—I wanted their okay so I

wouldn't feel like I was taking from them. That may sound odd, but I was concerned about it.

I had a friend who knew Max Roach, and I had her introduce me to him at a party. I timidly went up to Max and started talking about what I had in mind. I had some of my diagrams with me...there I was, interrupting Max Roach while he was having a bite of something to eat! I was nervous, but now it's funny to think back on it. But Max is such an important person in drumming history and I really felt it was important for me to get his okay. I didn't want to be stepping on any toes, as it were. Well, he couldn't have been more positive about my doing the project. He gave me a spiritual endorsement, and that was important to me.

I also had conversations with Joe Porcaro, Lewis Nash, "Smitty" Smith, and Kenny Washington about the project, and they were all very helpful. They were a wealth of information. Kenny was a tremendous help with the discography. He is one of the most knowledgeable jazz historians out there. When I saw his record collection I just wiggled out! But

my point in mentioning all of these people is that they all played an important part in the completion of the video, and I want to thank them for it.

WFM: Getting back to your playing career, you moved to New York City a few months back. Why?

CC: Well, after Sammy passed away, in 1990, I worked with Joe Williams for a little over a year, and I enjoyed that very much. And I was lucky that Joe called, because I was really down after Sammy died. In fact, the video wasn't quite finished, and I wasn't even sure that I *wanted* to finish it. But thanks to Joe, I got back into it. And while I was on tour in Japan with Joe, I met some Japanese distributors who expressed an interest in distributing the video over there, so I was very lucky.

I also did a tour with Joe Williams, Joe Pass, and George Shearing, which was a lot of fun. On that tour, Joe Williams got sick and they had to bring in another singer, and they got Grady Tate. And the first time I had to play behind Grady I stiffened up—I guess I was nervous playing behind a drummer I respected so



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much. I always tried to get Grady to play, just so I could hear him on my kit. That tour was a kick.

But after that, I couldn't get any work that I felt was stimulating. I didn't know what my next move should be. Well, so many people over the years told me that I should move to New York. And of course that's good advice, but without someone to help you it's a pretty scary idea. Well, I went up to see "Smitty" Smith give a clinic in California, and he and I were hanging out in his dressing room afterwards. And he turned to me and said, "Clayton, I've been wanting to ask you a question for a long time: How do you do what you do and make a living in L.A.?" I didn't know what to say, and he said I should move to New York. Well, I had heard *that* before, but Smitty also said he would help me. So, knowing that somebody would be there if I got in a jam or something, that gave me the courage to give it a try, and I can't thank him enough for it. Once I decided to move, I called my good friend Lewis Nash here in New York, and he offered to help, too, so I felt good about it. And Clarence Penn, the drummer with Betty Carter, helped get my apartment for me! So I had some help.

As soon as I got here I started teaching at Drummers Collective and at N.Y.U., and I started to get some nice subbing gigs, including the Mingus Tribute band, which was a great experience, because they just wanted me to go for it. The band has that great New York attitude, and I really was pushed to stretch out. I did the gig after Smitty, and I don't recommend that to anybody! [laughs] I also did some subbing for Brian Grice, the drummer on the Broadway show *Jelly's Last Jam*. Playing a show is nothing like doing a jazz gig. Anybody who does that type of work has to do a lot besides keep good time, swing, and be a good reader. You have to really prepare for that kind of work, and I really enjoyed doing it.

WFM: And now you're working with Tony Bennett. How did that come about?

CC: I got a call from Lewis Nash, who is probably one of the busiest and most recorded drummers working today. He did eight albums in December! That, to me, is just amazing. Anyway, he called to let me know that Tony Bennett's office

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The advertisement features two Gibraltar Intruder bass pedals. One is a single pedal and the other is a double pedal, both with a black and silver design. Four black and white portrait photos of drummers are arranged around the pedals, each with a testimonial. The testimonials are as follows:

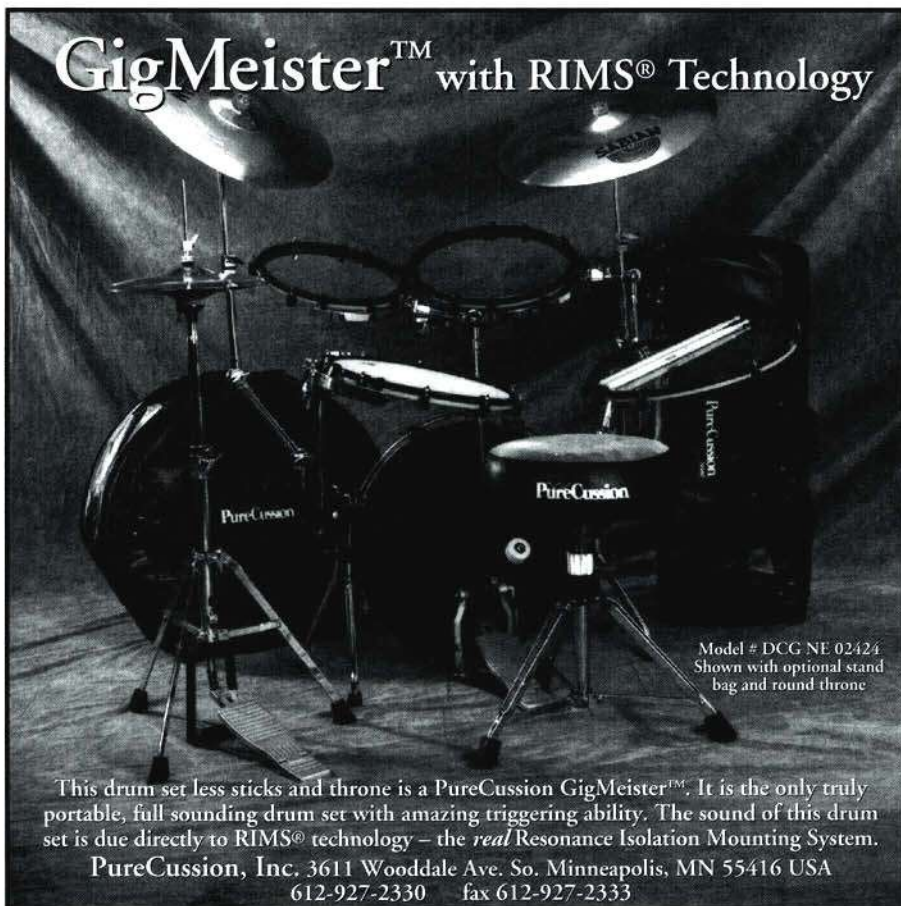
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would be calling. But time went by and I didn't hear from them. Then Smitty called and said Tony Bennett's office would be calling. So I guess the word was out that they were looking for a drummer, and luckily they finally tracked me down.

I actually had met Tony years before when I was with Sammy, and we had played tennis together. He and I share a love for the game. In fact, I challenge any drummer reading this to a tennis match the next time I tour through your town! [laughs] I think all drummers should have some other interest outside of drumming, and tennis is my passion. I think there are actually a lot of similarities between drumming and tennis: You need good concentration, you have to be relaxed under pressure, your vision should be good, and stamina is important.

So anyway, when Tony found out I was interested in the gig, he was excited about it, which I was honored to hear. That made me feel real good. Tony is singing so great right now, and it's a joy to work behind such a talented artist. He has that same work ethic that performers like Sammy and Frank have, and that just inspires me. So, thanks to some good recommendations and Tony remembering me with Sammy, I got a great gig. We even play tennis together on the road!

And I think it's a good gig for me because I get to show people some of the things that can be done with brushes. Hopefully I can get more musicians interested in the art form, because that's what I think it is, an art form.



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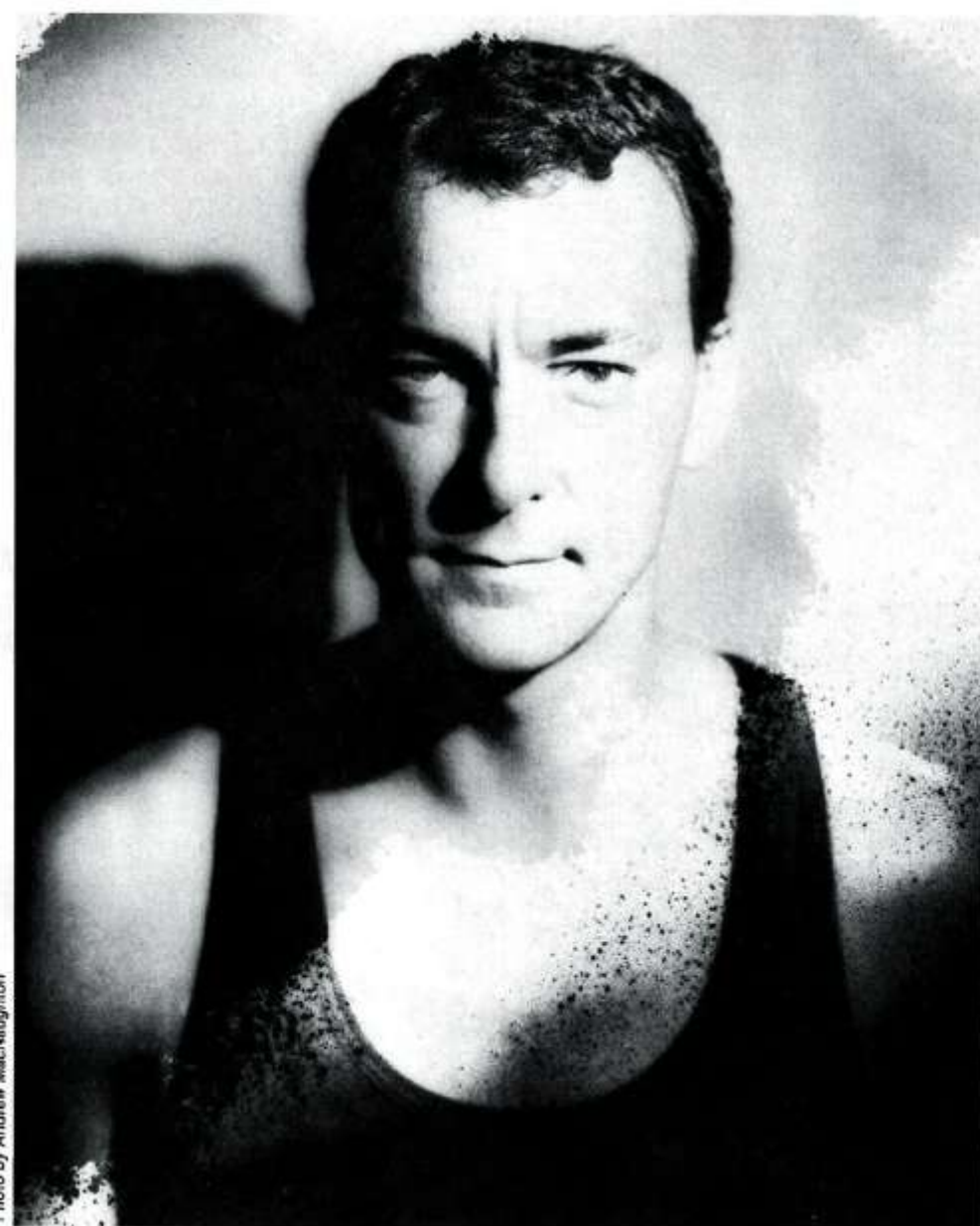
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Grouping Control Studies

by Ron Spagnardi

The exercise series below will help improve your hand control and help you develop a better feel for moving from even to odd groupings within the same tempo. When practicing this exercise it's important that you take it very slowly at first, and always use a metronome. A tempo of quarter note equals 60 is recommended for starters. You can increase your speed after you're comfortable with each grouping and when you can play the transitions from one to the next smoothly.

Take note that four different stickings are used: alternate

singles leading with the right, alternate singles leading with the left, doubles leading with the right, and doubles leading with the left. Be sure to repeat each sticking series at least ten times without stopping before proceeding to the next.

Also, be aware that the 5's and 7's can be the hardest to play evenly—and they become even *more* challenging with double sticking. Again, the key is to start at a slow, comfortable speed, increasing it only after all the transitions are smooth and all the groupings are played perfectly even.

The exercises are as follows:

- Exercise 1 (Grouping 3):** Four measures, each with a triplet of eighth notes. Stickings: R L R, L R L, R L R, L R L.
- Exercise 2 (Grouping 3):** Four measures, each with a triplet of eighth notes. Stickings: R L R, L R L, R L R, L R L.
- Exercise 3 (Grouping 5):** Four measures, each with a quintuplet of eighth notes. Stickings: R L R, L R L, R L R, L R L.
- Exercise 4 (Grouping 6):** Four measures, each with a sextuplet of eighth notes. Stickings: R L R, L R L, R L R, L R L.
- Exercise 5 (Grouping 7):** Four measures, each with a septuplet of eighth notes. Stickings: R L R, L R L, R L R, L R L.
- Exercise 6 (Grouping 7):** Four measures, each with a septuplet of eighth notes. Stickings: R L R, L R L, R L R, L R L.

Faking It

■ by Gary Griswold

You're auditioning for the band of your dreams, but it's clear that the level of musicianship is one or two notches above yours. Still, you know if you could only do well in the audition and get in, playing with these musicians would give you the opportunity you need to stretch your abilities and improve.

Or you're already in a band and the leader wants you to cover a song "just like the record," where the original drummer used both chops and equipment you just don't have.

Or maybe you're playing a well-paying casual job with a group of musicians and style of music you are unfamiliar with. Perhaps you're primarily a jazz player doing a Top-40 gig—or a set drummer filling in as a percussionist.

In each of these scenarios you're faced with a situation that is slightly beyond your level of drumming experience. What can you do to cope?

Fake it.

That's right, fake it. In certain circumstances, faking it can help you win an audition or save a gig from disaster.

Before going on, it might be a good idea to clearly define what I mean by this term. To "fake it" means to adapt to a musical situation in a way that is beneficial to all concerned, even if what you play, and exactly how you play it, may not be considered "correct."

Let me emphasize that what I'm talking about here is no substitute for dedicated practice and study. In fact, without a certain level of skill and musical ability, you *can't* fake it. Nonetheless, I've found that the ability to fake it has helped me through all stages of my drumming career,

and I believe it can do the same for you. There are times when, with a little creative thinking, you can turn a potentially disastrous situation into a win.

Let me give you some examples. At the end of my freshman year in high school I tried out for the school's jazz-rock band. This was the elite group in our music program; only the best players could get in. I'd heard that the band director was holding auditions, since all but one of the current drummers would graduate that year. I was playing well in the marching band, but I badly wanted to play drumset.

On the appointed day, two other hopeful drummers and I showed up for the audition in the band room. It was clearly not going to be a low-pressure situation for we three. The entire jazz-rock band was there, complete with a full horn line-up and a very hot rhythm section of mostly seasoned juniors and seniors. Sitting in on guitar was a fellow who had graduated a few years before and had gone on to be a full-time professional. To make things even more intimidating, the two drummers currently in the band draped themselves on chairs at the back of the room to watch the fun.

Simply stated, the audition was a disaster. None of the three of us had ever worked with a rhythm section before; our time was awful, our reading worse. All three of us could play some basic beats, but we couldn't even keep up with (let alone drive) the horn section. I showed some promise on one rock chart—I think it was "Spinning Wheel" by Blood, Sweat And Tears—and I held the beat when it

was just the rhythm section playing. But when the horns came in, my meter fell apart.

None of us were chosen. The band director, after conferring with the two current drummers, told us that he'd decided to have another audition in a few weeks. We were all invited back, but I suspected he hoped that elsewhere in the student body was someone who could better demonstrate some drumming talent.

A couple of weeks later it was the same three of us who showed up, and we were just as awful.

I was the last one to play that day. In my despair after the last audition, I'd consulted with my drum teacher, who advised me to forget fancy fills or even trying to read the chart. Just concentrate on playing good time, he'd said.

And I tried my best, but the figures the horns were playing always threw me off. I'd flail around trying to follow them, get behind, then make a mad effort to catch up.

Then during the middle of a Count Basie big-band chart I noticed something interesting: the baritone sax player's right foot. It was keeping perfect time on two and four, even when he

wasn't actually playing.

Ideally, a drummer should lead a big band, but it was clear that wasn't going to happen that day, and I was desperate. I visually locked onto the guy's foot, and followed with my left foot. As his foot went down, so did my hi-hat.

And it worked. I'm sure I still sounded pretty lousy, but for a good portion of two or three songs I played fairly decent time.

"There's no substitute for dedicated practice. But the ability to fake it can turn a potentially disastrous situation into a win."



In fact, a couple of the sax players turned around to see what had happened.

I got the gig. The director gave the provision that I'd work hard to improve my playing over the summer (which I did) and swore that he was going to ride me and mold me into a drummer (which he did).

If I hadn't been willing to adapt and look for help where I could find it, I never would have had those years in that band with that director—which, by the way, were crucial to my apprenticeship as a drummer.

The art of faking it also helped in college. I was in the percussion section of the university concert band, and the director was a tyrant, the kind that despises all student musicians, especially percussionists—and he was willing to demonstrate it at every rehearsal. One of the pieces we were working on had a 7/8 pattern that was to be played on a snare drum, snares off. It wasn't a terribly complex pattern, but it had to be played slowly and in exact time while matching accents with the woodwinds.

The director decided to stop rehearsal right then and there and work on this passage. It was a grand accomplishment for him: He could simultaneously excoriate both the clarinet and percussion sections. However, while several clarinetists played this pattern together, the part called for a sole snare drummer. One after another, the most experienced players in our section tried to play the figure and failed, only to be ridiculed by the director and commanded to "sit down and let someone else screw it up."

When it came to my turn, I decided to disregard any notion of correctness as well as the very strange sticking indicated on the music. I didn't even alternate; the section was slow enough that I could play the pattern with one hand, and thus better follow the director and the accents.

It worked. The director kept his mouth shut and ignored me, which was the highest compliment he could pay. He then leaped down the throat of an unfortunate young clarinetist whose phrasing he felt

was off.

The lesson here: Even in a "legitimate" percussion setting, directors don't care about correctness, they just want the part played well. If all else fails, cover the part any way you can.

After I graduated from college, I started playing regularly with a Las Vegas-style show band. The leader had taken many big-band and Dixie tunes and adopted them for this group's act. And while I'd played quite a bit of Top-40, rock, and funk in college, this group's music was a whole new education: lots of stops and starts, time changes, figures to catch with the horns, drum breaks as transitions between songs—all at a breakneck pace with no drum charts!

At one rehearsal I was faced with some wicked tempos at which I just couldn't handle playing straight time on the ride cymbal. It became apparent to me (and, I'm afraid, to the other members of the band) that what I was playing just wasn't driving the group. Then I remembered an interview with a famous jazz drummer who said that he handled ultra-fast tempos by breaking up what he played between his right hand on the cymbal and his left on the snare.

I decided to give this a try, even though it wasn't going to be the standard jazz ride pattern. I also added a little more bass drum than would normally be considered appropriate. In fact, what I came up with resembled a hard rock rhythm I'd heard Peter Criss use on a KISS song years before.

We launched into the tune, and about halfway through, the leader stopped the band, and looked hard at me. "What was *that*?" I politely told him I wasn't sure, and in the brief but uncomfortable pause that followed I started to have the queasy feeling that this gig might be slipping away from me. "That's *it*," he said. "That's *exactly* what this song needs."

And then he proceeded to discuss a couple of other tunes where he felt that same beat would work, and a few rehearsals later he brought in some new arrangements he'd written with the beat

in mind. My phony, incorrect, inappropriate, fake heavy metal/jazz rhythm eventually became sort of a group trademark.

Perhaps my greatest challenge to "fake it" came when I was auditioning to work with an Elvis impersonator. (Hasn't everyone?) I had gone through several songs with the band and seemed to be doing pretty well, when the "King" stopped us. "All right," he said, "so far, so good. But let's see how you do on this one. It's given most of the other drummers we've tried trouble, and we don't have a chart. However, we do have a tape."

And then he played for me a live version of the "Theme From 2001: A Space Odyssey/C.C. Rider" introduction Elvis had used in several of his later tours. The transition between "2001" and "C.C. Rider" consisted of a drum fill that to this day has me perplexed. It sounded to me like Presley's drummer was doing some very fancy double bass drum work. Needless to say, I had only one bass, and didn't even have that fast a right foot.

At my raised eyebrows, the phony Elvis stopped the tape, and with what I thought was a malicious grin, said, "One of the drummers we auditioned before said he couldn't do it, and another one tried it and choked. It doesn't have to be exactly the same, but it does have to be darn close."

I asked to hear the piece one more time, and instead of letting myself get blown away by the lick, I concentrated on counting measures. Then we gave it a run-through. When I got to the drum fill, I played on my floor toms an approximation of what I'd heard. It came out as sort of a cross between Gene Krupa's "Sing, Sing, Sing" pattern and an old Grand Funk beat I'd heard Don Brewer use. Nonetheless, it was similar to what was on the tape, and it filled up the right amount of measures.

When we were done, the impersonator said, "Well, I'll be..." adding a few unkindly expletives. "That's sure close enough!"

So is it possible for a drummer to build a musical career out of "seat of the pants" drumming, and thus depend on blind luck and sudden inspiration to carry the day? Is

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it okay to forget practicing and listening, just hoping to "B.S." your way through a gig? Of course not. The best thing any drummer can do for his or her career is to study, practice, and play with as many musicians as possible. But if you *do* happen to find yourself in a situation where you're thinking, "I'm not sure about this," it might be best if you set aside any notions of what's supposedly the "correct" thing to play, and just do what you can to make the music work.

Essentially, that's not really "faking it" at all. There's another term for it: professionalism.



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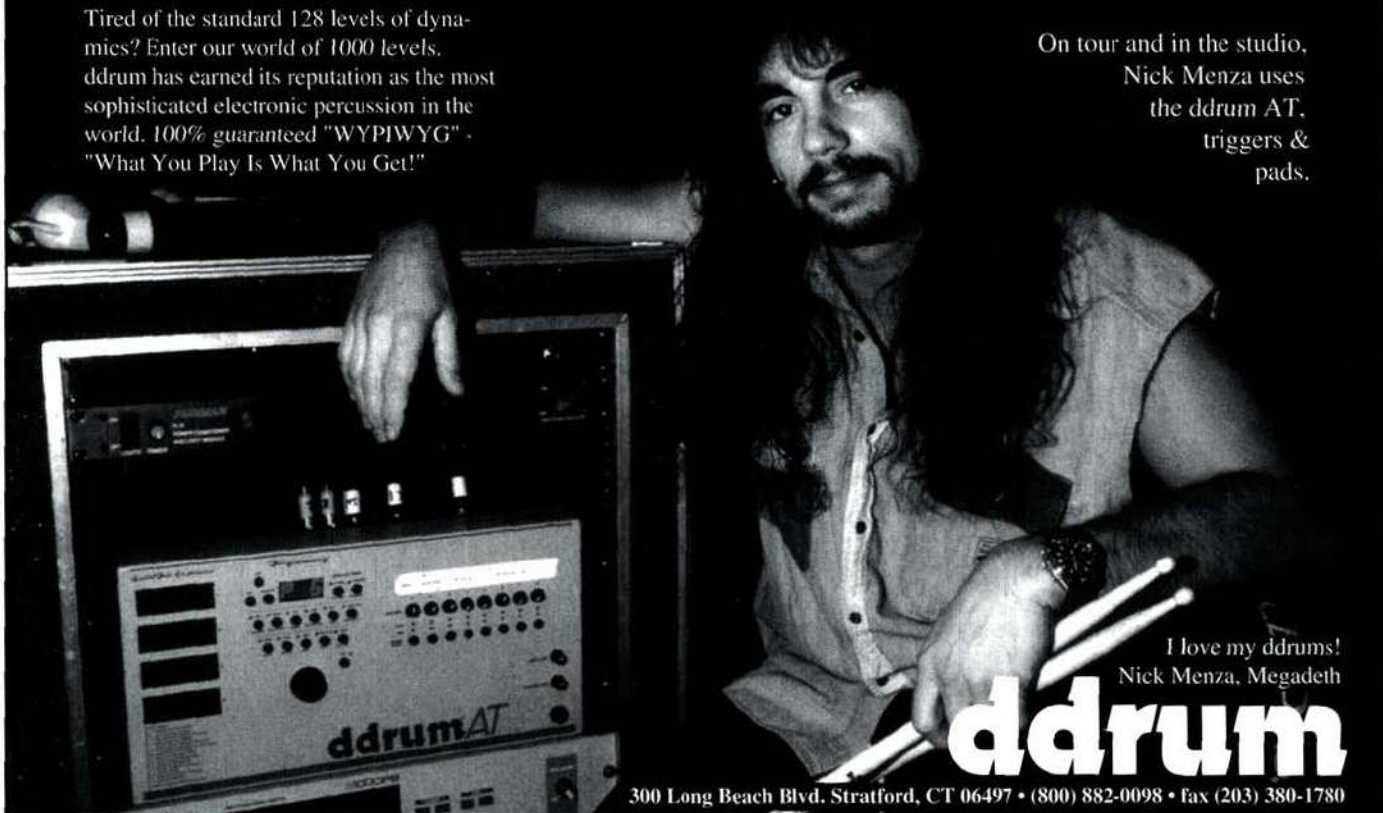
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Mike Mainieri

A Vibist's Perspective

by Ken Micallef

Not many musicians can cite credentials as diverse as vibraphonist Mike Mainieri's. While still in high school he played with Paul Whiteman's society jazz orchestra. As the years passed, the credits piled up: He toured the world with Buddy Rich's unconventional sextet, jammed at Birdland with Philly Joe Jones, Art Blakey, and Max Roach, released solo recordings with his own groups, and founded Steps (later to become Steps Ahead) with Michael Brecker, Eddie Gomez, Don Grolnick, and Steve Gadd. His first-call status as a session player led to production duties with Carly Simon, George Benson, the Brecker Brothers, Linda Ronstadt, and Jim Hall. On *Yin-Yang* (NYC Records), Steps Ahead's latest, Mainieri's fondness for mellow, Far Eastern-sounding electric jazz is underlaid by the drumming of Vital Information leader Steve Smith.

Mainieri's obsession with music began while he was a Fats Domino-loving kid growing up in the Bronx in a musical, tap-dancing family. Early classical vibraharp studies (as well as singing and playing the drums) gave way to a dive into jazz when Mainieri caught Lionel Hampton's outrageous show at the Apollo. By the time he was fourteen, Mike was touring with Paul Whiteman's orchestra and had his own jazz trio that played children's television shows.

After a three-month stint at Juilliard, Mainieri got a call to come down to the Village Gate to audition for Buddy Rich's band. Rich had just recovered from his first major heart attack, and this was his comeback gig.

"There are a lot of negative stories around about Buddy," says Mainieri. "But my relationship with him was positive. I was like his adopted son, in a way. I was a kid, wet behind the ears that night at the Gate. All the press was there, waiting to see if Buddy would drop dead after his first solo. After he played an entire set—and then a second one—I was still waiting to be called up. Finally, he said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, we've got this kid in the audience who says he can play the vibes. Should we have him come up and play a tune with us?' Everyone went, 'Yeah! Yeah!' So, I set up my vibes, and he called off this amazingly fast tune. I don't remember what it was, but it was at a breakneck tempo, just to test me. He gave me the first solo, which was like thirty choruses long. At the end, everybody went nuts. He got up to the mic' and said, 'What am I gonna do? I gotta hire this guy.'"



Mainieri's early training and youthful enthusiasm paid off. "I was at Birdland the next week, playing opposite Miles Davis with Buddy," says Mainieri. "Three weeks later Buddy fired the rest of the band and kept me. He asked me to write all the tunes for his next album, which we began recording. That really put me on the spot and allowed me to experiment, not only compositionally, but in terms of orchestrating for the various-sized groups that we had over the next six years."

Mainieri's father-son relationship with the highly charged Rich gave him a unique insight into the legendary drummer. Years later, Mike is still in awe of Rich's extraordinary talent and quietly giving nature. "He was incredibly supportive," he says. "He treated me royally for those six years. The thing people don't realize was Buddy's sense of discipline—and that he was a genius. He was one of the most remarkable musicians I've ever heard, and I've heard them all—Bird, Coltrane, and the drummers who played with them. When Buddy played a solo, I had to look at him—even on nights when I was really mad at him and he knew it. I was a moody kid. Sometimes, when I was mad at him, he'd play a solo just for me. He'd wink at me and I'd break out in a smile."

Something that isn't well-documented on record—except for a few Italian discs that feature Mainieri, Anthony Jackson, and Jack Wilkins—is how Rich's style changed in the context of his sextet. Subtle and slyly hip, Rich sounds totally comfortable with the younger players while still dropping the occasional bomb on the bass drum.

"The period he fronted the sextet was very important," says Mainieri. "Buddy is basically thought of as a big-band drummer, but I heard him in a completely different setting. When Mel Torme says, 'Buddy hated bebop,' I don't agree with that. Over the six years I played with him, we got him to stop playing

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4/4 on the bass drum—which he really objected to initially. He was flirting with bebop.

"They would double-bill us at Birdland or the Five Spot with people like Max Roach, Horace Silver, Art Blakey, or Miles. It wasn't a big-band mentality. It was a much more open, free-wheeling Buddy Rich that I heard. His playing was more inventive."

At many of these late-night gigs, Mainieri got to jam with the reigning bebop drummers who still set the standard for anyone contemplating a serious career in jazz. "All the bebop drummers used to sit in," Mike recalls. "We'd play from 8:30 to 3:30. By the last set, all the drummers were down there. Buddy would let them all sit in: Max, Philly Joe, Elvin, Ed Shaughnessy. The dreaded last set," he laughs.

During the '60s Mainieri did heavy studio time in Manhattan, meeting up with players who would dominate the session market. And he worked through the incredibly busy '70s and '80s—and right up to the present, when there isn't much of a scene left outside of soap opera soundtracks and "classic," Wynton Marsalis-styled jazz.

Fusion/funk groups like Jeremy and the Satyrs, White Elephant (one double album released), and L'Image (nothing released) coalesced into the acoustic jazz of Steps, all with the precision timework of Rochester native Steve Gadd at the helm. (Steps' *Smokin' In The Pit* and *Step By Step* featured Gadd; *Paradox* had Peter Erskine.)

Mainieri was introduced to Gadd at a session produced by Chuck Mangione for his brother, pianist Gap Mangione. Listening to that rare record today, Gadd's deep groove still stands out amidst the syrupy strings and quasi-jazz piano. "I was hired for this record with a large orchestra," Mainieri recalls. "I remember walking away from that session thinking about the drummer. Who is this guy? He had fire and intensity in his playing. That's what I remember. Session to session you don't expect any surprises—and then in walk Tony Levin and Steve Gadd. Steve was very quiet and shy. He still had his army haircut. A year later he sat in with L'Image and got the gig."

L'Image included Levin, Warren Bernhardt, and Gadd. The group played a lot of clubs until, Mike recalls, "Everyone got busy making lots of money, and I went back into the jingle business for a few years."

In Steps, Mainieri once again witnessed a drummer in transition. "When Gadd first started playing," Mainieri comments, "he was influenced by Tony Williams and Philly Joe Jones. But when he began playing jazz/rock, he got very excited. He studied with Rick Marotta and Bernard Purdie to learn.

"Steve was an amazing student," Mike goes on. "He was very quick and could read anything. He always had drumsticks in his hands and was always practicing. He became completely absorbed in the idea of groove. That's why he joined Stuff [with Chris Parker, Eric Gale, Richard Tee, and Gordon Edwards]. Steve is one of the few guys who stripped himself, right down to his birthday suit. He had amazing chops and was a great jazz drummer—but he wanted to understand the essence of groove playing."

In 1981, Mainieri enlisted Peter Erskine—fresh from Weather Report—to play on *Wanderlust* (NYC Records), a recently reissued recording that still sounds wonderful today. Exotic melodies and spacious moods abound with Mainieri's

bumblebee-like solos, egged on by Erskine's ethereal, chatty drumming. *Wanderlust* contains all the best elements of Steps Ahead: memorable compositions, excellent soloing, and loose, inspired interaction.

Mainieri's solo gigging at the time featured Omar Hakim, and even though he had used Erskine on *Wanderlust*, when it came to select a drummer for Steps Ahead, he still preferred the groove-oriented work of Gadd and Hakim over Erskine's lighter touch. "Peter was coming from a jazzier, looser feel," says Mainieri. "He used higher-pitched drums; he wasn't playing real 'big.' If I was playing a rhythm, Peter wouldn't necessarily play that rhythm with me. He was more interactive. It took some adjusting between Peter and me. Gadd and Omar were more pocket-oriented and harder-driving. Peter's style did change over the years. He started tuning differently and got into the groove. Since then, he's gone back the other way, as have I—towards a more acoustic, airy sound. At the end of his time with Steps Ahead, Peter was unhappy with how big the music had

become. He's a very esoteric, beautiful player—very lyrical."

Released under the Brecker Brothers' name but actually being a Steps Ahead release, two live CDs were recorded from the Montreaux Festival in Switzerland with Mainieri, Warren Bernhardt, Will Lee, and Steve Jordan. Jordan wasn't fond of busy, '70s fusion—but he was very good at playing it. His work on Don Grolnick's *Hearts And Numbers* and on John Scofield's *Electric Outlet* and *Who's Who* attest to that. "Jordan had a much more resonant kit than Gadd's," recalls Mainieri. "Gadd tuned deeper. The more he played with Stuff and those guys, the less I liked the sound of his drums. He had the toms tuned so no sound

"If you surround soloists with a seasoned rhythm section, you're in much better shape. The drummer is the band; he or she is the engine that drives the train."



came out. PLOP-PLOP-FLOP. Nothing going on there. Jordan had a tremendous wealth of talent as a drummer, but he wanted to get involved in other things. Speaking as a fan, it was a shame that he didn't keep developing on the drumset."

Mainieri's live gigs from Seventh Avenue South with Marcus Miller, Bob Mintzer, Eddie Gomez, Warren Bernhardt, and Omar Hakim are documented on the videotape *Mike Mainieri: The Jazz Life* (Sony). Stuck in the back of a small, smoky club, a young, skinny Omar Hakim flashes his ubiquitous smile, throwing off fire and ideas with steaming intensity. He was all arms, groove, and talent destined for Weather Report, Madonna, Sting, and points unknown.

"Omar is one of my favorites," says Mainieri. "He had really big ears in terms of hooking up with what I was playing. He could really feel certain rhythms that I play. He's the kind of drummer that spurs you on. I had a great time playing with him. He was more like Gadd. Zawinul copped him away from me!"

Mainieri eventually took the helm of Steps Ahead, making the group more electric and introducing new players. *Modern Times* and *Magnetic* used drum machines for a trendy sound and Peter Erskine for real feel. After Peter left the band, Steve Smith took the drum chair, playing on the recordings up to *Yin-Yang*.

What does it take to play in Steps Ahead? "The thing is time," Mainieri replies. "You either have it or you don't—not only the ability to swing, but an innate sense of time. One of the problems I have in finding younger drummers is that they seem confused stylistically. They don't spend enough time playing straight-ahead, rather than rock or funk. In an audition situation for the new band, 70% of the guys were slowing down. If anything, you prefer a guy who speeds up a little bit.

"These days," Mike says, "there is so much to learn. Steps Ahead plays everything from straight-ahead to Brazilian to some big band approaches. It's a hard chair to fill. It was simpler in the '60s; you weren't required to play everything."

Perhaps this is why the credits for most contemporary jazz recordings are a revolving list of names well-known to these pages. Where are all the new drummers and why aren't they getting a shot at the big gigs? "We need somebody who's been around the block a few times," says Mainieri. "If you surround soloists with a seasoned rhythm section, you're in much better shape. The *drummer* is the band; he or she is the engine that drives the train."

Mainieri cites Steve Smith's experience and musicality as prime reasons for his initial hire. "Steve Smith is one of the great all-around drummers," he states. "It took him a while to adjust to the different grooves we play. But he has a very solid background in jazz; he's originally a jazz drummer. And he's been the model musician, drummer, and gentleman. There's more to playing music than meets the eye. Discipline, having your shit together on the road, having patience with younger, inexperienced band members—all that counts for a lot."

Smith also responded well to Mainieri's penchant for having drummers play with a particular ride cymbal—one that doesn't clash harmonically with his vibes. "I asked Gadd to change his

cymbals," says Mainieri. "I don't like a real hard, dry cymbal behind me because of the nature of my instrument. I like to hear the acoustic sound of the vibes more than anything on stage. Even if I'm playing in a funky-out, straight-8th-note groove, I don't want to hear the individual notes so much. I like to hear the *feeling* of the drums, to get a sense of the drums. I prefer the looser ride, or a sizzle ride if I'm soloing. I loved Peter's cymbals. Gadd always had something funky hanging around that I'd like. I like the softer sound; I like the *cush*."

"Mike likes that seamless, straight-ahead swinging feel," said Steve Smith in a recent *MD* interview. "The interaction is there, but it's understated. It's more of just a pulse, which I find is very common with the players from his generation. With Buddy Rich and Philly Joe Jones and Papa Jo Jones, the tradition was more solid undertone."

At Mainieri's auditions for his latest version of Steps Ahead, Billy Kilson—most recently with pianist Ahmad Jamal—won the chair. He will now be recording and touring with the band.

With a career spanning forty years, Mike Mainieri could write a book about all the drummers he's worked with. "Even when I was a kid, rhythm and drums were king in our house," he says. "I've always felt an empathy with drummers. They tend to be the most daring people in the band."



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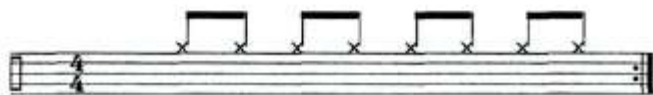
Your Left Foot

by William F. Miller



A few months ago I happened to see a rerun of MTV's *Unplugged*. On this particular show Sting was performing, with Vinnie Colaiuta playing some very tasty and understated licks behind the pop superstar. One of the things Vinnie played reminded me of something I had practiced years ago, but had forgotten about. (Great drummers have good memories!)

The particular technique in question involves substituting notes you might normally play with your hand on the hi-hat with your left foot. It's a very effective way to spice up beats and give them a slightly different feel. Here's a simple example: Let's say you were playing an easy 4/4 groove, playing all the 8th notes on the hi-hat, like this:



The technique involves playing the upbeat 8th notes with your left foot, like this:



It looks very simple by itself, but adapting it to more complicated patterns really makes them exciting.

Let's apply the technique to some simple 8th-note beats. As you're playing these examples, you want the notes that you play with your left foot to have a strong "chick" sound. Be sure to have the hi-hat completely closed when you play the note with your hand—you don't want any open hi-hat sounds.



Now that we've tried a few 8th-note grooves, let's make it a little bit more challenging and apply the concept to 16th-note grooves. Here's what your right hand and left foot will be playing:



Play the following examples very slowly at first, so you can get used to the alternating motion between your right hand and left foot. I found that bass drum notes that fall at the same time as right hand hi-hat notes are no problem, but bass drum notes that fall with the left foot make it a bit more challenging on the ol' independence. (Once you get it, though, the feel is intense.)



Finally, let's apply the technique to half-time shuffles. Let's take a look at the right-hand and left-foot pattern:



These examples are the most difficult of the bunch, but with a little practice they really add a different flavor to shuffles.



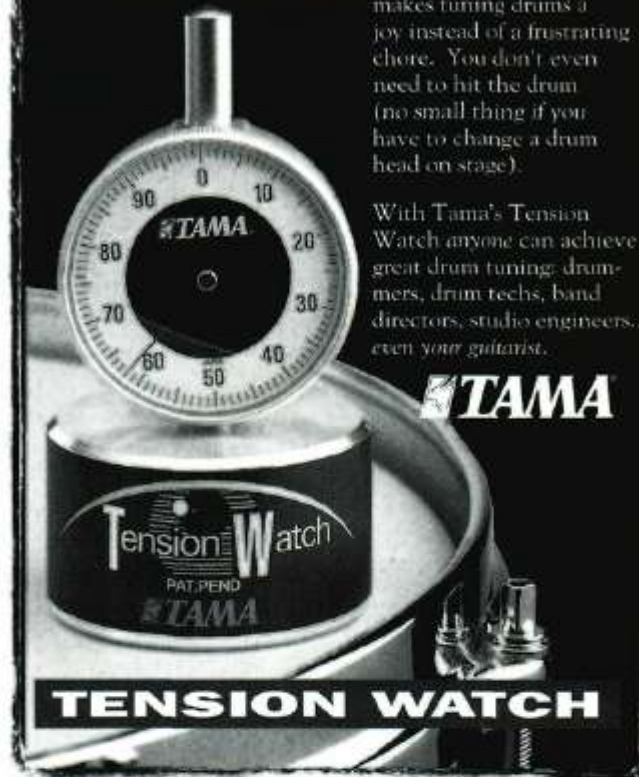
You might have noticed that all of these patterns have a simple backbeat on the snare drum. You might want to try coming up with your own beats using more syncopated snare drum rhythms. Also, I've had a lot of fun practicing these beats riding with my left hand on the hi-hat, a la Cobham, Phillips, Griffin, etc. That adds a whole new set of challenges. Either way you'll find that you'll start dropping this technique in all over the place—it works!



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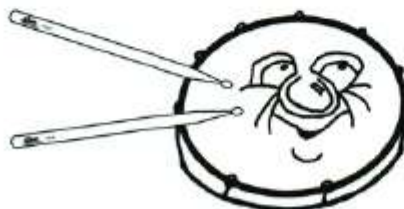


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continued from page 33

use a little more toms and build up into the chorus and rock it up a little bit more, things you can't get away with in the studio. 'Thunder Rolls' is real cool. The third verse didn't make it to the album and it's pretty much what the whole video is about, which ended up being banned. I get a little spot in there where I'm doing some tom things and sort of syncopated-type things with cymbal smashes. We add a third verse to 'Friends In Low Places,' and I do little things in there. That's actually one song where I can almost do anything I want."

According to Mike, the screaming crowds that generally attend a Garth Brooks concert present a particular set of problems. "Because they're so loud, I had to go to a headset mic' and put the count-off through the monitors," he explains. "I have a little on/off switch, and I can count off tunes so everyone can hear, especially if Garth introduces the song before the count starts." And how does he cut through the audience noise playing acoustic drums? "I have to *play hard*," he laughs.

This year shouldn't be too hard on Mike's hands, though. After a very burning '92, Brooks is taking it a little easier this year. In his off time, Mike is doing some session work and playing on and producing a Christian artist named Pam Walker. And, of course, he's catching up on his time with his family.

Keith Edwards needed a break from the road in 1988. He felt there were some situations he'd been neglecting, and even though he didn't want to leave his four-year gig with Amy Grant, he felt it was necessary. "It became more important than music at the time," Keith explains, "because I was unhappy. I love going on the road, but it was just one of those times." So Keith moved back from Nashville to L.A. and worked around town for about three years.

During that time, though, an identity crisis emerged. "I was doing some fun stuff," the drummer recalls, "but it seemed like such a struggle. I started thinking, is it time for me to stop playing and start selling shoes? Talking to Jim Keltner helped. He said that he went

through a time when he wasn't popular, and he had to sit down and take a long look at himself and ask, what am I? Am I a drummer? Am I going to do this forever, or did my time come and now it's over? So I realized, I'm a drummer.

"Not long after that, I was praying. I was saying, 'God, whatever I need to do, I'll do it.' It was after about three days of praying that Ricky Skaggs called. I had been playing with Sweethearts Of The Rodeo while I was in Nashville, and we had opened up for Ricky. He remembered me and he knew I was a Christian because we had talked about the Lord. I hadn't talked to him for two years, when all of a sudden, out of the clear blue, he needed a drummer and remembered me. I was doing my laundry and I heard his voice on the answering machine going, 'Hi Keith, this is Ricky Skaggs in Nashville, Tennessee....' I picked up the phone and he said that if I wanted to move to Nashville, I had a gig. He knew I had a son there but that I didn't want to move to Nashville without a job. In no time at all, I went from playing shuffles at the China Club to playing train beats at the speed of lightning," he laughs.

"I grew up playing country music in Oklahoma," Edwards recalls. "I played the old standards, but I had never played anything like that. Ricky gave me some time with it, though. The first day we rehearsed, it wasn't as good as it is now." Keith laughs at the understatement. "But I made it. Everything I play with Ricky is done with a click, which is easier. If it's too fast, it's suddenly a completely different song. If it's too slow, it's not happening. One of the things he asked me was whether I could play with a click, and I said, 'Yeah, that'll take a load off my brain, trying to memorize the tempos of thirty songs.' He's so aware of the tempo, too. He didn't slow down the click any, but the funny thing is, after you play things at that speed for about a year, it seems a lot faster when you hear it back.

"Your arms do get tired at first," Keith explains. "One of the things that's weird is that I play all that stuff with *Blasticks*, and they're heavy. I've developed my wrists to avoid flinging my arms around. I just try to trim everything down to do as little movement as possible, but still get it out there. I didn't really get sore, but

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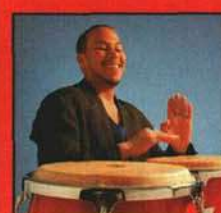
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FROM TURKEY, UNDER LICENSE
BY FRED GRETSCH ENTERPRISES
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when I first started playing with Ricky, it was summer and there were some outdoor places where it was really hot. Man, I had to adjust to all that exertion on a steaming hot stage—and drink a lot of water."

Edwards admits that Skaggs was not easy to work for in the beginning. "He wanted me to play everything that's on the record, down to the last cymbal pang. No matter how good a night is, he can remember songs where I did the wrong drum fill, even if it's the simplest thing. At the end of the gig, he'd go, 'On that song, in the chorus, that fill you played....' I thought, 'Okay, but what about the rest of the night?' That was good, but then you lost the cymbal crash at the beginning of that chorus...." Larrie Londin and the guys who were playing on Ricky's albums were just hitting them as it came to them. I had to *memorize* that stuff. It was very different from what I was used to.

"There was a time when I thought, maybe I'm not the right guy for this gig," Keith recalls. "I'd say, 'I don't seem to get all these things you want in here,' but

he'd say, 'No, man, you're doing it better than anyone.' I've got to just play clear and solid so everyone can hear the groove. With that many guys in the band, if I'm not laying it in right, they can pull me all over the place, tempo-wise. The fiddle is just a little behind the beat, which makes the guys in the band feel real relaxed and flowing. But if I can't bear down on the time, all of a sudden I'm starting to play relaxed, too. I was taught that in R&B you should lay back and play relaxed, but in bluegrass and in Ricky's kind of country, it sounds better to play right on the beat."

According to Keith, Skaggs even wants him to cop the sounds off the records. "On some of the old bluegrass songs he sang and the old hits he had, there's a nice fat snare. A tight snare just won't cut it. The newer stuff is poppin', and the fat snare doesn't sound as good on that. So I have two snares set up—a piccolo and a deeper one—and I trigger a cross-stick sound on an Alesis drum machine. I do that because on some of the bluegrass stuff we do, like 'Uncle Pen' or 'Wheel Haus,' the tempos are so fast that it's a lot easier for me to hit a pad than to play a

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cross-stick. On our next tour, I may trigger kick and snare just for fun."

Now that Keith's settled into the gig, Skaggs does allow some spontaneity, a fact that pleases the drummer to no end. "I love to play if the music isn't boring. One of the things that interested me in playing with Ricky was that it was not a typical country gig where I just kept the beat all night. To play with him, I really have to burn, and there are those times when I really can *play* and be intense. I really crave that. I never get tired of it. And traveling with Ricky is pretty comfortable. He stays in nice hotels, and we have our own bus. But I never get enough of the playing, because it still has that creativity in it."

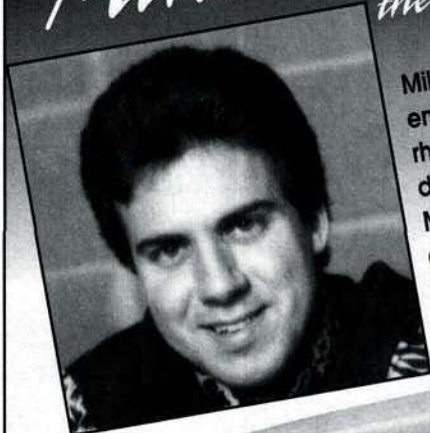
Martin Parker played with Ricky Skaggs from 1985 to 1987, and now occupies Vince Gill's drum seat. According to Parker, "The road is an easy deal. You go out and play full-tilt for an hour and a half, and that's it. Playing-wise, it's hard on your chops, though. You can't stay in practice because you're only playing that little amount of time. You can play on a

practice pad all day, or on your kit, for that matter, but you're not playing with a group."

Does he need to warm up before a gig? "At this age?" laughs Parker, who is just past forty. "Are you kidding? The past four or five years it's been, 'I don't think I'm going to have a beer tonight.' Actually, I've got a practice pad, and I'll warm up while the opening act is on. I'll do some paradiddles and long rolls—anything to loosen up the hands. I kind of look at it like a ball player might. The muscles in my hands can't quite take it like they used to, so when I get done with a show, I take *Nuprin*. You have to get rest and can't drink the booze. I try to take care of myself."

While Martin says that Gill is not too demanding ("All he needs is a clean backbeat, solid time, and a good attitude"), the drummer still enjoys more musical variety than on any previous gigs. "At one point," Parker says, "there were three songs with the train beat—the Skaggs thing. Now 'Oklahoma Borderline' is the only one we do in the show with that feel. We're doing a few 3/4

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power ballads. That's not a difficult thing to play, but it's different. The songs 'When I Call Your Name,' 'Pocket Full Of Gold,' and 'No Future In The Past' all have that feel. As far as other grooves, there's a tune called 'I Still Believe In You,' which is played with brushes and a backbeat, and 'Don't Let Our Love Start Slipping Away,' which is a straight-out rhythm & blues, rock 'n' roll groove. That's big fun. He's got another great traditional-feel R&B tune called 'Nothing Like A Woman' that's just *dirty* R&B, which is where all of us came from.

"Both Vince and Ricky came from the same bluegrass background," Parker continues, "and when their adrenaline gets going, they feel it on the edge. Jimmy Johnson is our bass player, and he and I will look at each other like, 'Wait a minute, let's hold it back,' but at times you've got to go ahead and let it go."

Martin adds that ballads need a special approach. "For ballads, I play the hi-hat right on the beat and think *groove*. 'Pocket Full Of Gold,' and 'When I Call Your Name' were played by Eddie Bayers

on the record. 'No Future In The Past' was done by Carlos Vega. Eddie approached it way differently than Carlos did. On 'When I Call Your Name,' there was an open snare part, where he hit it in the center of the drum and got more of a fat tone. Carlos gave the song he did more of an R&B approach with a rimshot. I try to stay close to their versions. At the same time, Vince is not a stickler about every little thing like Ricky used to be. With Ricky, every tom fill had to be just like the record."

Parker says that in order to be a good live drummer, you must pay attention to where the artist you're playing behind is feeling the groove. "Just play around where they're coming from," he advises. "If they're feeling a little more edgy, play it edgy. You can play a little more on top of the beat in some cases, depending on how edgy they're feeling. Maybe the crowd is a little more rambunctious that particular night. Then you can go *way* on top of it. Most of the time with this band, it falls into a good pocket.

"I'd say that, in most cases, playing

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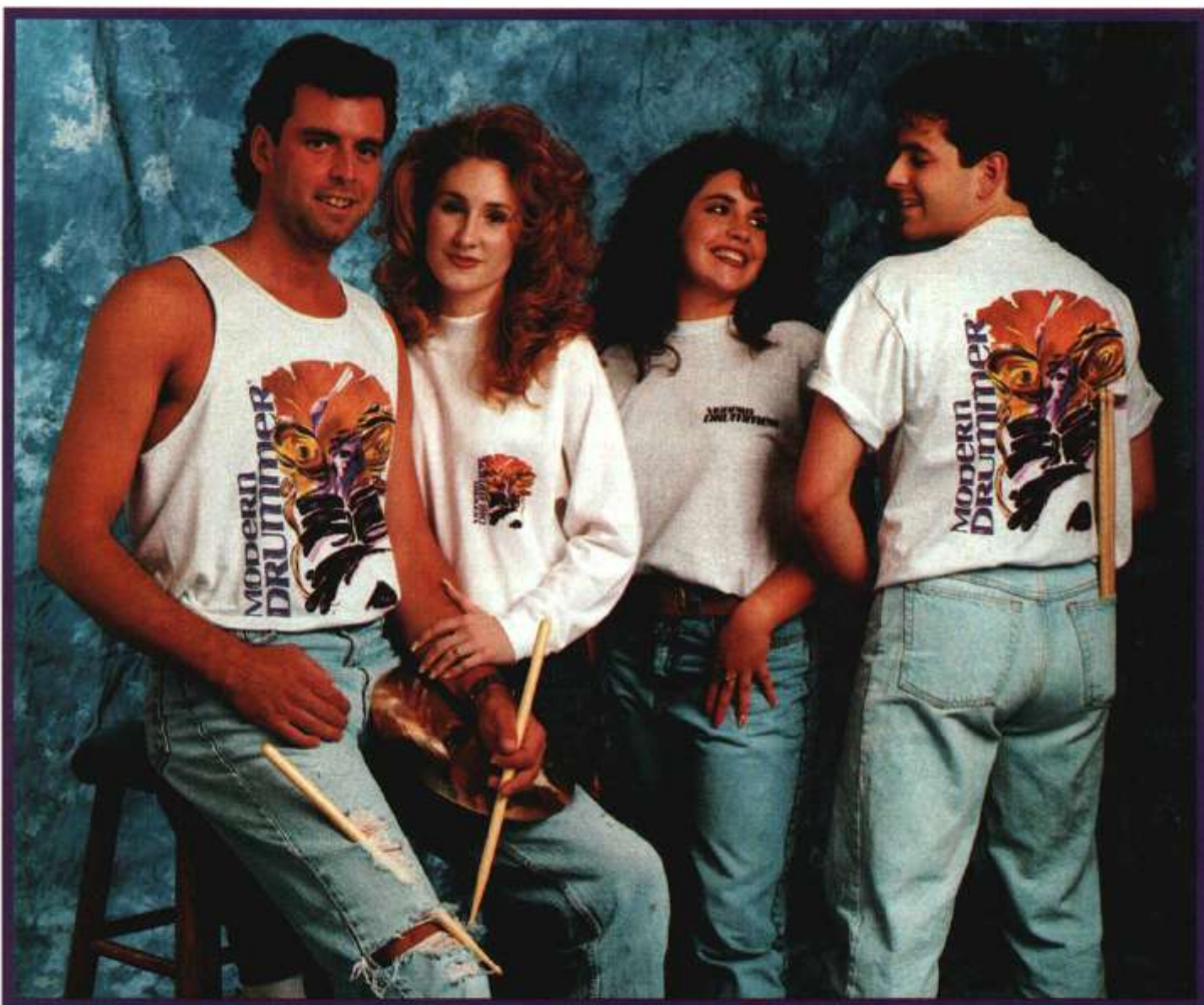
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country live involves being precise," Parker continues. "You can let some things rock a little harder, but you've got to be precise with that backbeat. It's got to fall in the right place to make it feel right, because there's not a whole lot going on to make the groove happen.

"You're also fighting the echo in the hall, which is different in each venue. Sometimes you'll hear a big roar when the house system comes on—or you'll hear one slap or two slaps that are out of meter, which throws off the guys up front. We did a show at the Astrodome where Mary Chapin Carpenter was opening for us, and I was at their sound check. We counted fifteen or sixteen distinct slaps off of the room. In a case like that, if the band can stand it, I will have our monitor guy jack the bass drum and snare as hot as the band and I can stand it. Usually that will cancel the problem out. In some rooms you just live with it and get done with the show and say, 'Well, that was a big one.'" Parker laughs. "You learn to adapt your ears. It's harder to find a pocket in an arena.

"We're working arenas that hold anywhere from 7,000 to 10,000 people now," Parker continues. "Out front it always sounds great, but we have to deal with our sound being different. But we're professionals, and we know how to deal with it," he chuckles.

Not surprisingly, the hardest part about the gig for Martin is being away from his family. "My wife has to get a lot of credit," he begins. "She stayed home and watched the kids so that I was able to do this. Now she is Dolly Parton's personal assistant, so when I'm home, I'm Mr. Mom and I'm loving every minute of it.

"You make the choice between going on the road and putting the money away while you can, or staying home and trying to do sessions," Martin says. "At the same time, I've worked for a bunch of different people over the years, and on this particular gig, we have twenty-seven people, including crew, and there isn't one jerk in the bunch. That's unheard of. There's nobody causing any problems. In my opinion, musically, personally, and financially, this is the best gig in town."

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After playing for two years in a club called The Ragtime in Huntington, West Virginia with Billy Ray Cyrus, Gregg Fletcher is thrilled to hear the roar of the crowds. "During the club days, we had to play a lot of other people's songs—two of theirs, one of ours. The success has allowed us to put together a show we want to play. We dropped what I call 'the charade.'"

Cyrus's overnight success has caused Gregg to change his approach, though, including a step up from 5A to 5B sticks. "You do have to play harder," he explains, "because your body is *telling* you to play harder. Our crowd is not the typical thing. They scream so loud that you can't hear what's going on. Sometimes you can't be as dynamic as you should be or want to be. Plus, when you play in a live situation like that, tempos tend to speed up a little bit. It's a very big energy boost." Fletcher adds that he usually counts off the songs on the hi-hat because the crowd is so wild.

In the live show, Gregg has a six-

minute drum solo an hour and a half into the set. "What The Hell Is Going On' is the song the drum solo is in, so that's one of my favorites," he grins. "It's a song that Billy Ray wrote in 1981, and I get to show my stuff on it. It's kind of a country-stomp boogie song with a killer slide guitar part. They all drop out, and then I immediately go to town. The lighting rig comes down over the top of me, and the crowd goes wild. The drums are loud, and they're tearing people's heads off. That's one of the things I enjoy most about playing live—other than getting up there with my five friends and playing music. Partway through the solo I stop, and as soon as I do that, the crowd is on their feet, screaming at the top of their lungs. The drum solo changes from night to night—I'm a spontaneous drummer."

The show's pace requires that Fletcher warm up beforehand. "I'll do some hand exercises and flex my forearms a little bit to get loose," he explains. "Basically I try to stay fresh. I get to the gig about an hour before, and the adrenaline is incred-

ible. Before the show, the music is playing on the PA, and we're back in the dressing room, huddling to say a prayer. Usually when we're in that huddle, the house lights will go out and we can hear the crowd just shaking. That, right there, is enough to make us ready. It's like a big Friday night ball game. That hour and a half goes by so fast. Before you know it, we're in the dressing room eating peanut butter and jelly and then riding on the bus to the next town. I try to think in my mind what I should and shouldn't do at the next gig to make it better."

Fletcher feels that his being the drummer on the albums (a rare event in Nashville) gives him the advantage of really knowing the tunes. "We're very conscious of how our recorded parts are going to sound live," he explains. "We minimize the parts in the studio so that everything will be covered as close as possible live. We base everything around our live show. What you hear in the studio is a live recording. We go in as a six-piece band, and all except for the vocal, which

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Aside from "What The Hell's Going On," Gregg enjoys performing "She's Not Crying Anymore" because "the band gets to be real dynamic," he enthuses. "The drums are real quiet at first, and at the end it's the big climax. 'I Never Thought I'd Fall In Love With You' is one of my favorites because it's a rockin' tune. 'Achy Breaky Heart' is one of my favorites because when we play that, it's strictly a John Bonham drum groove, and the place explodes. It's the grand finale and people go nuts, which is so much fun. 'It Could Have Been Me' is one of my best works in the studio, I believe. It

was a different kind of song and it just feels good. I play very tastefully on it. I was proud of myself. That song required finesse, and I feel like I put in all the right ingredients. It's one of the only songs that I don't pick apart when I hear it.

"Billy Ray likes things as solid as a rock," Gregg continues. "He likes to have a steady, killer groove. His songs are real simple and honest, so he doesn't like a wimpy style of playing. He's country at heart, but he grew up on rock 'n' roll, just like I did—Zeppelin, Grand Funk Railroad, Black Sabbath, Jethro Tull. That's what taught me. When I play, that comes out of me. He likes that Zeppelin groove."

Fletcher admits that performance conditions can vary from night to night, but he feels it's one of the circumstances to which musicians must adapt. "Some people aren't as fortunate in some of the towns we go to," he begins. "Some of the state or county fairs aren't as big. They do what they can. We can be in an arena in Dallas, Texas one night and then go to some other city the next night, where it's

a county fair and not the best of conditions. We go from one extreme to the other. But I think this band is good at adapting to any situation, from television to whatever. I would like to do an unplugged type of show and play with brushes, a snare, a kick, and a couple of cymbals, and let the guys just play their thing. That's my whole thing live: I just try to lay down that killer foundation so the guys out front can knock people out."

Fletcher emphasizes that the players in Billy Ray's band are not sidemen, but *bandmembers*. "For the longest time, Billy Ray tried to get it publicized as a band thing," Gregg says, "but people fought him on it. To me, he's one of the truest, most sincere musicians I've ever known. He's not the greatest guitar player, or even the best singer, but that doesn't matter. He believes in his songs, and the way he plays them and brings them to you, he makes *you* believe in them, too."

Even though he and Cyrus's other musicians are "bandmembers," Gregg says that he still has trouble being taken seriously sometimes. It seems to be a

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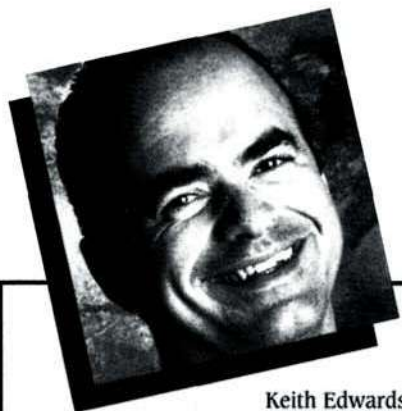
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case of the "drummers aren't musicians" syndrome that many players experience. "You know how people think," Gregg says. "He's just the drummer." Sometimes I get heard and sometimes I don't. Sometimes I'll put an idea out and it'll fall away, but other times it'll come back. For instance, I wanted 'Someday, Somewhere, Somehow,' to be on the album, but it wasn't even considered. Finally, our producers said to go out in the studio and play it to see what it sounded like. We did and they stopped us in the middle and said, 'This is a great song, let's do it.' It ended up making the record and it's one of my favorite songs."

As far as the other tough part of his job, Fletcher echoes the other drummers: being away from home. "My wife, Robin, is so supportive, and my whole family has sacrificed a lot. But I try to make it up to them. One day we'll be able to look back at this and say, 'Boy, life was good.'"



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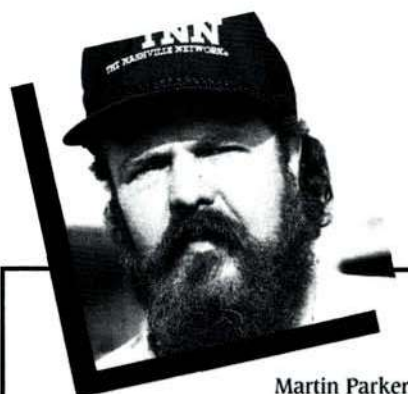
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continued from page 9

Pat Torpey on Mr. Big's recent release.

Hank Guaglianone on tour with Sonia Dada.

Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste and Jaki Liebezeit both played tracks on Nicky Skopelitis's recent release, *Ekstasis*.

Fergal Lawler on the Cranberries' *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We*. They have also been touring of late.

Tommy Alesi on drums and **Billy Ware** on percussion in Beausoleil, on tour supporting their current LP, *La Danse de la Vie*.

Carl Allen has been very busy lately touring with Benny Green, Buster Williams, Steve Turre, and Donald Harrison, and recording with Don Braden and the Message.

Ed Shaughnessy has been appointed artistic director of the New York State Summer Jazz Institute, in Sarasota Springs, N.Y.

Clint De Gannon on the road with Bob James and Michael Franks. He can also be heard on records by Mitchel Forman, David Charles, David Friedman, and Chuck Loeb.

Dave Lombardo has formed a new band with Gus Chambers (formerly of 21 Guns) and Bobby Gustafson (formerly of Overkill and Cycle Sluts). A record is in the works.

Michael Blair served as musical director for Soul Asylum's MTV

Unplugged concert. He is currently producing Swedish bands New Clear Clouds and 99th Floor.

Terry Feller on albums by Maurice Williams, Stacey Cortes, and Josh Logan.

Clem Burke has joined the re-formed Romantics.

Ed Cassidy, the self-proclaimed "oldest rock drummer," is working on a new album and playing dates with Spirit.



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Lars Ulrich: "Nothing Else Matters"

Transcribed by Darren Haitmanek

This month's *Rock Charts* features Lars Ulrich on Metallica's self-titled, multi-platinum release from last year. On "Nothing Else Matters," Lars lays down a heavy, blues-oriented groove. The intensity of the track, although at a medium-slow tempo, adds a lot of tension to the tune. (Lars plays the hi-hat slightly open throughout.)

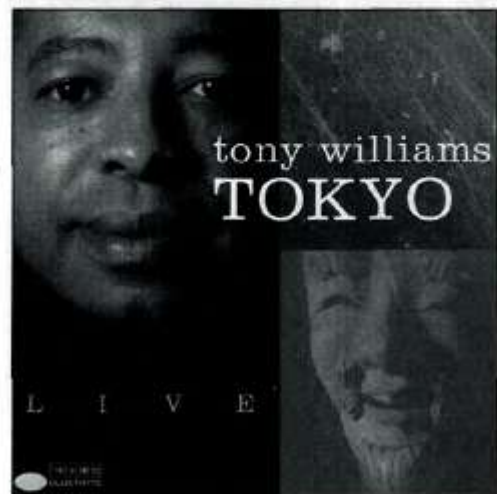
MUSIC KEY

Open	O	C.C.	Rim Click
H.H.	X		
T.T.			
S.D.			X
T.T.			
B.D.			
H.H.			
w/foot	X	Add'l Toms	

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in five systems. The first system begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The first line of music contains a measure with a '2' above it, followed by a measure with a '4' above it, and then a measure with a '4' above it. The second line of music contains a measure with a '2' above it, followed by a measure with a '4' above it, and then a measure with a '4' above it. The third line of music contains a measure with a '2' above it, followed by a measure with a '4' above it, and then a measure with a '4' above it. The fourth line of music contains a measure with a '2' above it, followed by a measure with a '4' above it, and then a measure with a '4' above it. The fifth line of music contains a measure with a '2' above it, followed by a measure with a '4' above it, and then a measure with a '4' above it. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines, and is labeled with the title 'The Rose Tree' at the top.



RECORDINGS



TONY WILLIAMS

Tokyo Live

Blue Note CDP 0777 99031 22

WALLACE RONEY: trp

BILL PIERCE: tn, sp sx

MULGREW MILLER: pno

IRA COLEMAN: bs

TONY WILLIAMS: dr

Geo Rose; Blackbird; Ancient Eyes; Citadel; Warriors; Angel Street; Sister Cheryl; The Slump; Mutants On The Beach; Civilization; Crystal Palace; Life Of The Party

The last five records that Tony Williams has recorded with his group have been the product of the studio and have been a showcase for the increasing beauty of Williams' composing. Now, with *Tokyo Live*, we hear Tony with all fires burning, playing his original compositions with four of the young lions as sidemen. The resulting two and a half hours of music is magic.

There are enough high points in the opening song, "Geo Rose," that it can stand alone as an illustration of the growth of Williams' band and the power of this disc. The studio version of the tune (on *Civilization*) sim-

mered. This version burns from the opening drum solo to a nuclear moment at the start of Wallace Roney's solo, when Williams flies away from the beat and explodes against his cymbals for four measures before recovering his restrained groove. Underneath Mulgrew Miller's piano solo, Tony experiments with a straight groove, four rimshots to the beat, and with a twisting Latin feel. Every song on *Tokyo Live* has the same excitement, with each player at the height of his recorded skills. A must!

• Adam Ward Seligman

SAMM BENNETT

The Big Off

Factory Outlet KFWCD 126

SAMM BENNETT: vcl, dr, perc, keybd

THE DOG, ROGER KLEIER: gtr

KATO HIDEKI, SEBASTIAN STEINBERG: bs

DICKIE DWORKIN, BILLY MARTIN: dr

and others

Rich Man's Dog; Buckets And Big Ideas; Blue Jay Way; Desert Story; Little Money Creek; Hey You; Empty Song; Nervous Laughter; Billions And Billions Of Hamburgers Sold; Sacred Cow Killer; No Go Between; Interrogation; Motherless Child; Morning Incident; Hail The Hero; No Friend Of Mine; I Could See Your Dream

It seems fitting that Samm Bennett should include a cover of the Beatles' "Blue Jay



Way" on his new solo album, *The Big Off*. One of the Beatles' biggest yet most underrated contributions to modern music was their studio explorations in texture. By throwing standard group instrumentation out the window, they created unusual sonic environments for their

pop songs to inhabit. Samm Bennett follows that same noble path—but in his own unique manner.

Yes, Bennett is a drummer. No, this is not a "drummer's record"—at least not insofar as a source for copping licks. But as a testament to the power of applying a uniquely drummer-like attitude to song structures and arrangements—and coming up with tunes that work, dammit—*The Big Off* is a success. Proudly, Bennett's strongly developed musical personality doesn't deny his place as a drummer, but rather uses it as a basis for finding new ways to arrange sounds. But melody

never takes a back seat to rhythm—nor vice-versa. Again, these are pop songs (albeit in a strongly New York downtown vein), and they are the masters, not the licks or rhythms used in them. Bennett's is a fresh and—in our chops-happy little drumming world—much-needed approach to our craft. (*Knitting Factory Works*, 47 E. Houston St., New York, NY 100123)

• Adam Budofsky

DISINCARNATE

Dreams Of The Carrion Kind

Roadrunner9102-2

BRYAN CEGON: vcl

JAMES MURPHY, JAMES CARMAN: gtr

TOMMY VIATOR: dr

JAMES MURPHY: bs

De Profundis; Stench Of Paradise Burning; Beyond The Flesh; In Sufferance; Monarch Of The Sleeping Marches; Soul Erosion; Entranced; Confine The Shadows; Deadspawn; Sea Of Tears; Immemorial Dream



Some aspects of modern Florida-born death metal, just by the nature of the music and the sub-culture, are predictable. You can count on barrages of inarticulate guitar notes and electronically "enhanced" vocals that could stir the dead. You can also count on the most physically demanding double-bass drumming on the planet.

If you thought guys like Tommy Lee and Lars Ulrich put the pedal to the metal, check out Tommy Viator. Like others of his ilk, Viator proves adept at 32nd-note flurries and brutally blistering double-kick onslaughts ("Beyond The Flesh"). But he shows much more on cuts like "Entranced" and "In Sufferance," where staying with the shifts and curves at these tempos can't be an easy physical feat. Continuous twin-kick assaults at 160 beats per minute are nothing for this guy!

Viator is just one of a handful of unheralded Florida death denizens who show remarkable endurance and stamina that are simply unmatched (if also not required) among other forms of music.

• **Matt Peiken**

INCLINED

Bright New Day

Chaos/Columbia OK 53150

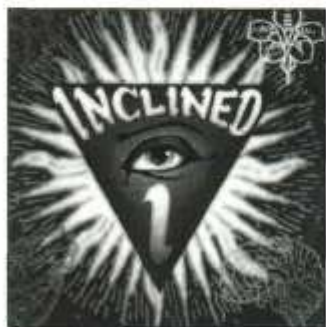
MILES TACKETT: vcl, gtr, cello

GENE PERRY: bs, vcl, Chapman Stick

STEVE SMART: dr, perc

Two Minds; Somewhere In The Middle; The Atom; Day At The Races; She Won't Go; How Deep Is This Well?; Leading To Light; Both Ways; All We Need; Far From Afraid; There's A Window; Bright New Day

Slippery, slapping, funky fatback is what this Los Angeles trio serves up, tangy and spilling over the brim.



Lead by guitarist/vocalist Tackett, son of studio heavy and Little Feat guitarist Fred Tackett, Inclined take the New Orleans via California blues of the Feat and prop it up with hip hop and funk and a smidgen of Stevie Ray Vaughan, creating a sleek hybrid that positively boils.

Tackett (twenty-three years old, as are the other members) is an ace guitarist, spinning ethereal chordal yarns one minute, firing off barbed Hendrix-Vaughan-Lowell George rockets the next. The tunes shimmer and bend, aided by catchy vocal hooks supported by the equally adept rhythm section. Smart plays his groove nimble and to the point, eschewing flash for directness. He mirrors Tackett's staggered rhythms note-for-note, creating an edgy forward motion. Inclined's collective chops wouldn't matter, though, except that their songs are *very* good. Now, if they'll just record their next album in Muscle Shoals to get rid of that LA tech-slickness, Inclined will really be angled.

• **Ken Micallef**

TOOL

Undertow

Zoo 72445-11052-2

DANNY CAREY: dr

PAUL D'AMOUR: gtr

MAYNARD JAMES KEENAN: vcl

ADAM JONES: bs

Intolerance; Prison Sex; Sober; Bottom; Crawl Away; Swamp Song; Undertow; 4°; Flood; Disgustipated

From the primal, tribal opening cut, it's obvious that Tool and drummer Danny Carey offer much more than passe grunge metal fare. The description alone is probably enough to make the band



wince. The truth is, though, that few new groups get as low in the register as Tool.

While Tool's string players are primarily riff-minded, Carey goes into several directions with authority. Not many drummers can boast such clean attack and handwork and accompanying flow to their fills. But Carey's forte is laying low and then, just at the right time, exploding into a blistering roll that sets an entire passage on fire.

The simplicity of his beat in "Sober" has a beauty all its own. Then after a thrash-like double-kick pummeling, Carey bows to Billy Cobham with a thrilling one-bar rip in the final bridge of "Crawl Away."

While Tool slowly gains a foothold on the metal market, this record should go a long way toward establishing Carey as one of the genre's up-and-comers. (*Zoo, 6363 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028*)

• **Matt Peiken**

VIDEO

GENE KRUPA

Jazz Legend

DCI/CPP Media

15800 N.W. 48th Ave.

Miami FL 33014

Time: 60 minutes

Price: \$39.95

Perhaps even more than his wonderful playing, what really stands out when looking back at old Gene Krupa clips is the

man's boundless *enthusiasm*. There is never a hint of doubt that Krupa simply loved sitting behind the drums—and that half his fun came from sparking that same enthusiasm in the listener/viewer. With the advantage of hindsight, one really understands why Krupa would be the one to bring drums to the forefront and make them a credible solo instrument: As Louie Bellson says, you simply *had* to watch him when he performed. This "new" video from DCI/CPP Media brings the magic of Gene Krupa into clear focus.

Because Krupa was, as narrator Steve Allen says, "a matinee idol," hours of his artistry—overdubbed or not—have been preserved on celluloid, and this is where most of *Gene Krupa: Jazz Legend* derives its power from. In addition to great early filmed performances with Benny Goodman and with his own big band, the video includes a priceless promo for *The Gene Krupa Story*—where Gene himself gives some pointers to actor Sal Mineo—some later TV clips of Krupa's small group featuring some decidedly "modern" playing from the "old man," as well as a drum "battle" with Gene, Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton, and Mel Torme.

Gene Krupa: Jazz Legend is a fitting monument to a true original; like Krupa himself, it clearly projects the soul-stirring qualities of great art and performance—and proves how that excitement is highly contagious. Now, where are those sticks? I wanna get some kicks!

• **Adam Budofsky**

BOOKS

THE CYMBAL BOOK

by Hugo Pinksterboer

Hal Leonard

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Price: \$24.95

If you know a cymbal question that isn't answered in these 212 large pages, you'd better 1) consult a divine authority, 2) board a time machine and return to 17th-century Constantinople, or 3) find a publisher.

History, family trees, manufacturing processes, cymbal types, selection, testing, setups (yours included), acoustics, sound alteration, care, first aid—it's all here, presented in scholarly yet inviting detail and augmented with quotes, color plates, and rare illustrations.

Dutch drummer/editor Hugo Pinksterboer visits most of the world's known factories and interviews dozens of executives, craftspeople, relatives, players, and a few hostile witnesses to create this fascinating labor of love. His lens explores noisy, soot-filled sweatshops dominated by log-burning ovens, then marvels at infallible computer technology.

No, the author doesn't reveal any romantic secrets—indeed he buys into the ad copy more often than necessary, while protecting some naughty endorsers. And the diverse data freely commingled (and repeated) throughout the text might benefit from a tighter format. (The most readable page is editor Rick Mattingly's downright moving introduction.)

But discard such trifles: Settle into the passenger's seat and be reminded that words (and logos) are inadequate to describe the magic of these precious instruments. Read *The Cymbal Book*, and learn and listen with your ears.

• **Hal Howland**

SPEED AND THRASH METAL DRUM METHOD

by Troy Stetina and Charlie Busher

Hal Leonard

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It's about time! In the wake of countless rock chart books that assume too much, along comes an instructional book/CD package that assumes nothing.

Realizing many young rock and metal players don't know how to read music, the authors here show them from the ground up. The opening chapter clearly but thoroughly explains rhythmic notation, the musical staff, and how they fit together as a map for turning what's on paper into music. The book then goes into where the various drums and cymbals are placed on the staff. Flams and combinations of notes follow.

The next two chapters deal with fills, triplets, double bass, and more complex notation. Series of two-bar patterns and a chapter-closing "workout," which puts all discussed elements into play, let you play what you've just learned.

What sets this book apart, though, is the accompanying compact disc, which gives audio cuts of every example in the book—essential for instructional purposes.

Including two cuts of each workout, one minus the

drums, was exceptionally thoughtful. And though the odd-time section is cursory and a bit misleading, the entire package is still so valuable that all drummers who haven't learned to read—rocker or not, beginner or experienced "ear" player—can benefit.

• **Matt Peiken**

INNER RHYTHMS

by Frank Colonnato

Publ: Leon Music Press

81 Main Street

Nyack NY 10960

Price: \$9.95

This collection of snare drum etudes is geared towards intermediate to advanced players who wish to challenge their reading abilities. Rather than being based around repeating motifs or a theme-and-development structure, each solo is "through composed," meaning that there is constant variety. One would be hard pressed to find two identical bars in any of the thirty-four etudes. While this approach may detract from the etudes' potential as contest or recital material, it does prove to be extremely valuable for honing one's reading abilities. Covering a variety of time signatures (including shifting meters), the book is rich in rhythmic variety and would be a good companion to books such as Cirone's *Portraits In Rhythm* and Firth's *The Solo Snare Drummer*. The hand-engraved music seems a bit quaint in this age of computer notation programs, but it doesn't seriously detract from the book's value as the pages are clear and legible with accurate rhythmic spacing.

• **Rick Mattingly**

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Calypso Grooves

by Chuck Silverman



MUSIC KEY

Open	○	R.C.
Hi-Hat	×	Bell
S.D.	■	
B.D.	■	

This column will examine some very basic calypso styles and grooves. These grooves have worked for me, but by no means are they the only grooves available—there are dozens more. To get an idea what these grooves sound like, it would be good for you to check out music from the West Indies. Actually hearing the music will make your playing sound more realistic.

Let's start with a very basic pattern. It's played on the hi-hat and bass drum. As with a lot of the grooves we've been studying, emphasis on the bass drum is often not necessary. In fact, overemphasizing the bottom of the groove ends up creating a feel that's too "bottom-heavy." Keep that in mind as you play this example.

1

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

In some West Indian music I've heard a very common rhythm played on two bells. Here's that pattern.

2

We can apply this sound to the drumset. Try either placing both hands on the hi-hat or one hand on the bell of a cymbal and the other on the hi-hat. Here are those two patterns. There's some tough independence involved here, so, as always, please take your time.

3

R R L L R R L L R L L R R L L

4

By applying the bass drum rhythm and one of the bell rhythms to the drumset, I've developed the following more contemporary patterns. Perhaps they will give you some ideas for creative applications.

5

6

Lastly, here's a typical pattern that I learned from a drummer from Curacao. It resembles the soca rhythm. There are many variations to this, but the feel is very strong. Try playing it with your left hand on the hi-hat and your right hand on the snare. (You *can* play the right hand on hi-hat and left on snare if you prefer.)

7



Drumshells

Where It All Starts

by Woody Thompson

Although not well-known to drummers, located in the rural heartland of America are two companies that have had a considerable influence on drum making in this country for several decades. They are Jasper Wood Products of Jasper, Indiana, and Keller Products of Manchester, New Hampshire, producers of quality plywood drumshells. Shells made by these two manufacturers are used in the industry by both small specialty drum makers and large commercial drum companies.

Keller and Jasper are durable companies that have succeeded by maintaining strict quality control and by responding to the changing needs of the marketplace. They are responsible in no small way for the high quality of many American-made drums.

Known in the industry as OEMs (original equipment manufacturers), both Keller and Jasper are essentially wood product manufacturers producing a wide range of components for every-

thing from musical instruments to furniture and airplanes. Both are specialists in the manufacture of molded plywood products, hence their expertise with drumshells. Both have also developed processes for the fabrication of plywood cylinders that have become an industry standard for drum making.

Neither company, however, regards itself as a musical instrument manufacturer. The heads of both concerns are quick to point out that the designs of their shells are dictated by the drum makers with whom they work. Factors such as number of plies, thickness, size, and specific wood used are decisions made by the specialists of the client drum companies. Jasper and Keller are raw shell contractors, and further refinements such as edge beveling, sanding, wood finishing, and hardware mounting are done by the contracting drum companies. The stories of these two companies, however, shed light on just how drums are made in the U.S. today.

Jasper Wood Products

In 1924, Jasper Wood Products was founded by Clarence Gramelspacher and his two brothers. Starting as a kitchen cabinet company, they soon began to specialize in more salable molded plywood products. The company began making drumshells in the '30s as part of their product line, and these were used by both Leedy and Camco. Gramelspacher had developed a patented process for making plywood cylinders, and the basic idea is still in use today. His son Gene, present head of

Understanding Drumshells

by Bill Detamore

The most important aspect of a drum is the shell. Edges, hardware, and head combinations are all secondary.

Maple is a very hard wood and produces a sharp attack and a lengthy sustain. Birch is a slightly softer wood and will soak up some of the attack and give a less sustaining, mellower sound.

Lower-line drums are generally made of Philippine mahogany. This wood is very inexpensive, which is why drums made from it are very affordable. But it's also very soft, which gives drums a very muffled attack and a short sustain.

Most shells are made of the same wood all the way through, which is the ideal situation. Since every wood resonates at a certain frequency, you can change the tone by mixing the composition of the shell. In my opinion, this creates a conflict inside the shell, as one fre-

quency tries to dominate the other. A shell made of the same wood, on the other hand, will work with itself to create a pleasing tone.

Many factors determine the tuning range and the original note or timbre of a shell. First, the overall thickness affects the tonal quality. The thicker the shell, the higher the note. The thinner the shell, the lower the note. Also, the longer a shell is, the higher the note will be.

When I first began making drums, I made all 6-ply shells. The first problem I noticed was with the snare drum. The overall thickness was about 1/4", and when the snare drum was tuned up—unless great care was taken with the tensioning—the shell would go out of round, though it would always go back because of the strength of the maple. The problem was handled by going to an 8-ply shell, which had enough thickness to keep the shell round. The higher note of the shell also gave the drum a very pleasing crack, but it was still low enough to

keep it nice and meaty.

A 6-ply bass drum I made was so thin you could feel the flex when you picked it up. The shell's note was very low, which gave the drum tons of bottom. But the benefits did not outweigh the negatives. An 8-ply shell brought the note up a bit, which helped the attack, but it was still low enough to get a huge sound. I also noticed that with toms 14" in diameter and larger, the 6-ply shell produced a note that was so low that though the drum had plenty of attack, it produced mostly sub-lows. The floor toms didn't have enough definition. A 7-ply shell brought the note up a bit, and was just enough to give the larger toms a better tuning range. The 6-ply shells from 6" to 13" still sounded great, so I left them alone.

To understand more about the properties of wood and how they affect sound, visit your local library and read up on the subject. You'll probably find it very interesting and quite easy to understand.

the company, describes this process: "My father patented the idea of inserting a rubber bag and using air pressure to form plywood shells. It worked better than the vacuum process that had been used up until that time. He had three patents, and after the patents expired, other people started using different versions of the bladder technique.

"You start with a square block of laminated maple, maybe 18" to a side," Gene begins, "and you cut out a 14" diameter hole, snare drum size. That core piece is taken out and called the male. The part of the block the core is taken from is called the female. Then you glue the veneers (plies) and lay them back in the female part. Electrodes are placed on both sides of the plies as well. Workers bend the veneers themselves. They make it look easy, but if you don't do it right, you'll break the veneers or they'll fly away like a spring.

"The makers have to lay it up with none of the seams in the same place, otherwise there would be a weakness there," Gramelspacher continues. "Then they insert a smaller core with a rubber bag wrapped around it back into the hole. It's closed up tight so that nothing can move, and then air is pumped into the rubber bag to the pressure necessary to hold the glue-spread veneers. The electrodes, a plus and a minus, provide the current field for heat to cure the glue. The shell will cure in five to eight minutes."

The type of wood used in Jasper shells is determined by the

needs of the drum companies. "We've worked with the drum companies over the years on this," explains Gramelspacher. "Our shells have usually been maple or birch, with some versions of poplar, sycamore, or gum inner plies to reduce the cost. Marketing-wise it's become more appealing to have an all-maple shell. In their premium lines they'd go with all-maple because that's what the marketing people would demand. For specialty or anniversary drums we've even used mahogany or Carpathian elm from Africa."

A quality shell starts with quality materials, and Gramelspacher emphasizes the importance of *precisely* milled veneers. "We get the majority of our maple from northern Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Iowa. Very few people can tell just by looking at a tree what the quality of the wood will be. But I've worked with some loggers who could tell by the bark, or by the formation of the tree, whether the grain would be tight and the wood would be good. It's amazing.

"We buy our veneer in flitches," Gene explains. "A flitch is when they split the tree in half, put it on the sheer, and cut it into sheets. When they're finished, you could put each slice back together and it would look just like a tree. The inner veneers of a shell can only be *sound* grade—no knots except perhaps pinhole ones. The outer and inner veneers need to be very clear if there's going to be a clear finish on there. On a 30" drum you need a 96" or 98" veneer, and getting that quality today

Finding The Timbre

by John Good

Imagine you're standing near a stack of raw drumshells. They're all the same size, with no bearing edges, finish, or drilled holes. Take the top shell off the stack and turn it sideways. Place your left index finger inside the shell to support it, and tap the outside with your right thumb. You'll hear a tone. Discovering that tone is called "timbre-pitching."

Now grab the next shell and tap on it. You'll hear an entirely different tone. As you continue, you'll discover that some shells have low tones, some have high tones, and others have tones in the middle. This tells us that we can't treat all drums equally when we're tuning them, even if they have the same dimensions. You may *think* you know how a 10" tom should sound, but you actually have no idea until you listen to the shell itself.

Another misconception, in my opinion, is that there are such things as "jazz,"

"rock," or "fusion" tunings. Any time you sacrifice the sound of a drum for a style of drumming, you've made a mistake.

To me, there are only two styles of tuning. I like to call the first type "downtown" tuning—the pitch bend and fall that producers dream about. The first step in attaining the "downtown" is to tap the shell and determine its pitch. Make sure you don't tap at the top or bottom, where the lugs are. That area is influenced by tension that will disguise the true sound. Instead, tap the shell in the center, where you'll hear the drum's true timbre. Consider that the root note. Then tune the bottom head slightly flat of that note, and the top head a minor 3rd above it. The "downtown" tuning style accentuates big, hanging fills that need to make the most out of every note.

Some drummers like to play fast figures around the drums, which don't leave space for big, bending notes. A sound that will highlight this sort of playing is called the "cannon" sound. To achieve it, simply tune both top and bot-

tom heads to the shell's fundamental tone.

Whichever tuning method you use, keep in mind that when you tap the shell, you'll hear an upper and a lower fundamental. I suggest you tune to the lower pitch, since it's very difficult to tune to the higher fundamental tone.

The more you practice timbre-pitching, the easier it gets. You may find you'll need to strip the drums of their heads and hardware to clearly hear the tone. Don't get *lazy*. Go the extra distance. It'll be the most vital thing you can do to make your drums resonate properly.

One final tip: Since you need two hands to tap on a shell, have a tape recorder running while you tap. Put the drum down, rewind the tape, grab a pitch pipe (or any in-tune instrument), and identify the pitch. Then mark it on the inside of the shell with a felt-tip pen. That way, anyone will be able to tune the drum to its optimum pitch without having to go through the entire timbre-pitching procedure.

is becoming a problem.

"In most cases, a single piece of veneer is made up of two or more pieces spliced together," Gramelspacher continues. "The splicing is done on a machine that butt-glues pieces together with a bond as strong as the wood itself. It's very important that each veneer be uniform in dryness. You can't have some that are 3% moisture and some 15%. We check the moisture on the veneer plies before they go into the mold. You couldn't have moisture at, say, 15%. That's too high. It would probably blow up the shell. The moisture would steam, and under pressure the glue wouldn't bond. And when you open up the mold you'd have a big blister on the shell.

"If you get variations in the thickness of each ply," Gene warns, "it'll cause a lot of problems, too. When you make a veneer drumshell that has no voids, it means the circumference changes from the first ply to the second, so the veneer has to be cut to exactly the right length. Not only that, but it has to be cut perfectly vertically square in order to join snugly in the shell. It's a difficult thing to manufacture a void-free cylinder. It's tough to do a good job."

That Gramelspacher's company *does* do a good job is apparent by the feedback they get from drum companies. "We figure on 1% or 2% rejection in our factory when we get into a big

run," he explains, "but we've never had returns from the drum companies. We don't have much music experience, so we rely mostly on the manufacturer and try to produce a shell to their specifications. From what I understand, they like our shell. It produces a nice sound for them. It's sound and it's solid. Our shells have a lot of strength, especially when those kids tighten those heads down. They tell us our shells can almost go to the limit."

Keller Products

Robert Keller, Sr. founded Keller Products in the late '30s in the old New Hampshire mill town of Manchester. The company started making drumshells in the early '50s, according to Keller president Dick Steinberg, providing shells to the Rogers Drum Company when they were owned by Grossman Music, and later when they became part of CBS. Currently, drumshell production accounts for 20% to 30% of their total wood manufacturing. "Our shells are made of one piece of wood," says Steinberg. "The seams don't show up in one straight line, so they act as a one-piece cylinder. They're basically plywood, which makes them stronger than solid wood. A solid shell will be stronger in one direction, but plywood will be stronger in two directions, because you're crossing plies. The inner and outer face are

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always horizontal to give you hoop strength. We supply our cylinders in pure maple, unless someone specifies something else. Birch and maple are a lot alike, though some people feel they like the sound of all-maple, so we decided to standardize on all-maple.

"I'm not a player," Steinberg continues, "which, frankly, is an advantage, because if someone asks, does this sound better or does that sound better, I'm not inclined to give my opinion. It's really an individual choice. Drum companies have their own ideas on how they want their products to sound. We don't do bearing edges for the same reason. Everybody has a different philosophy on bearing edges. We'll make recommendations. We might be working on development projects with two or three companies at one time, and obviously we're not going to leak information from one place to another.

"The Keller group of companies is very solid," Steinberg states, "and consequently we're able to do some R&D that perhaps other people aren't in a position to do. For instance, we make shells with much thicker plies for marching bands, because the kids like to wind the heads up and have them screech.

"I got involved with this company in 1978," he goes on, "and the first thing I found out was that a lot of people, instead of

doing the pearling that everybody did for many years, were going to clear coats and sunburst finishes. That's been continued to a good degree. For that reason we upgraded our cylinders immediately. Then, of course, when they came out with clear heads and the inside of the drum became a concern, we acted on that also. Other companies have had to paint their insides gray or black because they weren't able to get the kind of inside finish that looked good through a clear head. The inside of our shells are pretty close to being as cosmetic and blemish-free as the outside."

The Drum Companies

The Corder Drum Company of Huntsville, Alabama (the Corder family recently sold their business) used both Keller and Jasper shells. The company originally used only Jasper shells, but later added Keller to their line to take advantage of the deeper, ready-cut sizes that were part of the standard Keller line. "I think both companies put out good shells," says Ken Corder. "I don't think anyone who buys a Keller or Jasper shell is going to have any problem. The quality of the wood is almost identical inside and out.

"We'd never mix the two brands in a set," Corder continues. "When you work with shells all day, you easily recognize the dif-



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ference between brands. But personally, as far as the sound, I don't think there's a dime's worth of difference between the two. The Keller shells were real clean-looking and well-sanded when they came in. We had to do more finishing work on the Jaspers, but they usually had some very interesting, good-looking grain."

From the '50s to the early '80s, the Rogers Drum Company manufactured a high-quality, innovative line of drums. Rogers purchased all of its shells from Keller and Jasper, the majority coming from Keller. Ben Strauss, former marketing coordinator for Rogers, comments on Rogers' decision to purchase, rather than make their shells: "We didn't have the machinery to make a proper shell. It's like the automobile business. You have your specialty manufacturers. You let someone who knows how to make a shell make them. There's nothing wrong with that. And Keller and Jasper did a great job. They were good shells."

"We never liked how our competitors made their shells," says Strauss. "There wasn't any finesse in how they did it. They took five plies of wood, flat, and they'd skive the edges and make a circle out of it, overlapping the joints. Our shells were not overlapped. What Keller did for us was to take five plies and butt them each in a different place so we had four solid pieces against one seam all around the drum. Then we added a five-ply reinforcing ring—what we called a liner—to the top and bottom

of the drum. It was hard rock maple. That's why we said our shells were more round than anybody else's."

"We also had Keller build our snare shells slightly undersized," he continues, "so the edge of the head at the hoop would not be choked by the shell. All our bearing edges were cut to 1/16" so that the head could vibrate as much as possible. If you've ever seen a string bass player install a bridge on his instrument, you'll notice that he shaves the part of the bridge that the strings run over to allow the strings to resonate. We took the same approach with our bearing edges."

Both Jasper and Keller take understandable pride in the quality of their shells and their ability to stay competitive in an increasingly crowded market. "Getting into the cylinder business is not inexpensive," says Keller head Dick Steinberg, "and making a good cylinder is a trick. Our company is reliable. We ship on the button, our prices are competitive, and we're very interested in our customers. We deal on the same quality level that an aerospace or computer company might."

"It's getting very competitive," says Gene Gramelspacher. "The imports have affected us, but we've established a particular niche in the business. We're trying to maintain the knowledge that we've developed here. We don't want to sell that, because then we'd be out of business."



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Megadeth's Nick Menza Countdown To Extinction



"Skin O' My Teeth"

Nick Menza's powerful drumming drove Megadeth's *Countdown To Extinction* to platinum-selling status last year. While the disc was more straightforward than previous releases, Nick kicked the band with a solid groove and some tasteful double bass work. On the up-tempo "Skin," he played the following beat during the verse sections.



"Foreclosure Of A Dream"

Nick plays a nice four-bar phrase on the chorus of this track. His double bass pattern doubles the guitar and bass riff perfectly.



"Sweating Bullets"

The shuffling "Bullets" has Nick slamming a partially open hi-hat and suggesting the shuffle with his bass drum pattern. (This is from the chorus of the tune.)



"High Speed Dirt"

This two-bar pattern is from the verse of the tune. Again, Nick slams his partially open hi-hat and just *drives* this up-tempo track.



CONTEST WINNERS

Tony Palermo is the winner of a Roland *TDE-7K* Compact Drum System. Tony's card was picked from among the over five hundred entries submitted at Roland's twenty-two nation-wide drum clinics this past year. Ten second-prize winners in the contest received electronic percussion instructional videos.

Winners of Sabian's 10 Big Ones contest were recently announced. The first-prize winners, who received a five-piece set of Sabian AAX cymbals, are: **Johan Ahlenius, Bill Lichtsinn, Bill Hayman, Steve Garland, Harry Morgan, Alaina Sharpshair, Jim Witherell, Teresa Reveal, Steve Hultquist, and Adam Hanna.** Second- and third-prize winners, who took home Sabian *AA El Sabor* or *HH Jazz* ride cymbals, are **Marvin King, Kerry Hargreaves, Gregory Matarrese, George Rivera, Clay Wells, Victor Polk, and Ville Russo.** One hundred other entrants won Sabian T-shirts.

PRO-MARK "TRADE-UP" PROMOTION

Pro-Mark has announced its "Trade Up To Pro-Mark" promotion. Through this October 15, drummers can trade in an old pair of a competitive company's drumsticks and receive a new pair of Pro-Mark sticks in return, free of charge. Along with their sticks, drummers must include a special coupon available exclusively in the September and October issues of *Modern Drummer*. Drummers can choose from six wood-tip and six nylon-tip models in popular sizes. For more information, call Pro-Mark's Drummer's Hotline at (800) 233-5250.

FESTIVALS AND CLINICS

Berklee College of Music recently concluded its first bi-annual Percussion Week. Activities included twenty clinics, four major concerts, and nine music industry exhibits. Artists who gave drum-set clinics include **Dennis Chambers,**



Gregg Bissonette performs at Berklee's Percussion Week.

Gregg Bissonette, Casey Scheuerell, Bob Breithaupt, Ed Soph, and Jim Chapin. Among the concerts was a show called "Talking Drums," featuring Bissonette, Scheuerell, and Chambers with some of Berklee's top musicians.

Thorn Hannum's Mobile Percussion Seminar had its debut recently at Hagerstown Junior College in Maryland. The event featured students from junior high schools, high schools, a university, and the U.S. Marine Drum & Bugle Corps. Hannum's program covers drum technique fundamentals, reading, and musicianship.

Brookdale County College in Lincroft, New Jersey is offering summer jazz clinics "for the musically literate who wish to develop jazz artistry." The section on drums, taught by Bob Boyd, will be held on Monday, August 23, from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. For more information, call the school at (908) 842-1900.

Yamaha has been very busy in the



Buddy Williams and band perform at Yamaha's Drums For Lunch At Night.

drum education field lately. The week of April 26 saw five clinic/concerts at Drummers Collective in New York City. The Drums For Lunch At Night program included appearances by drummers **Ivan**

Hampton, Zach Danziger, Akira Tana, Buddy Williams, and Richie Morales.

In other Yamaha-related clinics, **Rich Holly** recently performed with the Chillicothe High School band at their 27th annual Celebrity Concert, **Dean Gronemeier** worked in Las Vegas-area schools to improve students' knowledge of percussion, and **Cloyd Duff** gave a clinic at the Percussive Arts Society's Day of Percussion at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. In addition, **Dave Weckl** has been on the go, as usual. He recently returned from a clinic tour of Michigan, Ohio, Nevada, and California. And **Ed Soph** did a clinic as part of the Aquinas College Jazz Festival.

ENDORSER NEWS

Doug Hoffman of Boston is endorsing Sapphire Percussions products.

Jim Keltner, Dennis Chambers, Bashiri Johnson (Whitney Houston), **Buddy Williams** (Roberta Flack), and **Charlie Drayton** (Keith Richards) have been using *Slapper* specialty drumsticks.

Recent additions to the list of Gibraltar hardware endorsers include **Jimmy DeGrasso** (Lita Ford, Suicidal Tendencies), studio percussionist **John Oliva, Rafael Padilla and Robert Rodriguez** (Miami Sound Machine), **Joe Porcaro, Emil Richards, Jose Rossy** (Robert Palmer, Weather Report), **Michael Shrieve, and Michael White** (Lindsey Buckingham).

Kaman's Toca percussion line is now being used by **Ndugu Chancier, Billy Cobham, Sheila E., Sonny Emory, Richie Morales, Gumbi Ortiz, Emil Richards, and Debra Dobkin.**

Darwin drums are now being endorsed by **Steve German, John Dittrich** (Restless Heart), **Mike Palmer** (Garth Brooks), **Butch Trucks, Wayne Sheehy** (Ron Wood), **Paul Riddle** (Marshal Tucker Band), **David Anderson** (David Benoit, Larry Carlton), **Mel Taylor** (the Ventures), **Danny Cochran** (Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets), and **Jon Wurster** (Superchunk).



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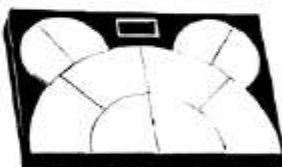
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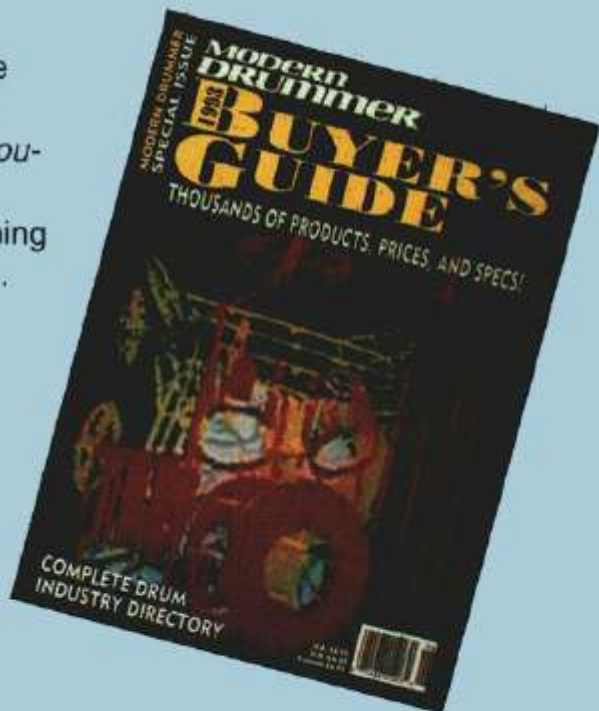
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ADVERTISERS INDEX

ADVERTISER	PAGE NUMBER	ADVERTISER	PAGE NUMBER	ADVERTISER	PAGE NUMBER
Abel Industries	47	Hot Drummer Video	67	PureCussion, Inc.	74
Anvil Cases	69	Hot Sticks	37	Remo	50
Aquarian Accessories	99	House Ear Institute	53	Roc-N-Sac	98
Atlanta Drums & Percussion	110	Humes & Berg	17	Rogers Manufacturing/Tone Foam	96
Atlanta Pro Percussion	37	Istanbul/Gretsch	90	Roland	70
Brook Mays Music Company	118	KAT, Inc.	118	Royce PRO-cussion	39
Calato/Regal Tip	68	Latin Percussion, Inc.	46,59,71,88/89,112	S&S Industries	85
Cappella	87	Looking For Direct Distribution	55	Sabian	45/45,46/47,49
ddrum	81	Ludwig	Inside Front Cover	Sam Ash	74
D. F. Enterprises	118	MD Back Issues	94	SaphirePercussions	106
Darwin Drums	97	MD 1993 Buyer's Guide	119	Shure	61
Dauz Designs	37	MD Library	96	Sonor	56
Discount Distributors	110	MD Subscriptions	93	Suncoast Music Distributing	92
Drum Doctors	74	Mapex	48	Super Gloss/Sam Barnard	110
Drum Workshop	62	Meinl	13,72	Tama	14/15,66,87
Drummers Collective	100	Music Tech	111	Total Products	57
Drums On Sale	110	Musicians Institute	64,83	UDU Drums	110
DrumST6	94	Paiste	41,80	Universal Percussion	58,90
EPS/Visu-Lite	96	Parziale	96	Vater Percussion	81,91,118
Easton	63,65	Pearl Corporation	18/19,52/53,	Vic Firth, Inc.	7,106
Evans Products	1		Inside Back Cover	Waddell's Cymbal Warehouse	118
Vic Firth, Inc.	7,45,92	Percussion Paradise	96	Working the Inner Clock	55
Fork's Drum Closet	118	Precision Drum Co.	118	Yamaha	43
Gibraltar/Kaman Music Corp.	51,73	Premier	5	Zildjian	10/11 ,Outside Back Cover
HQ Percussion Products	63, 110,118	Pro*Mark	54,75,100		

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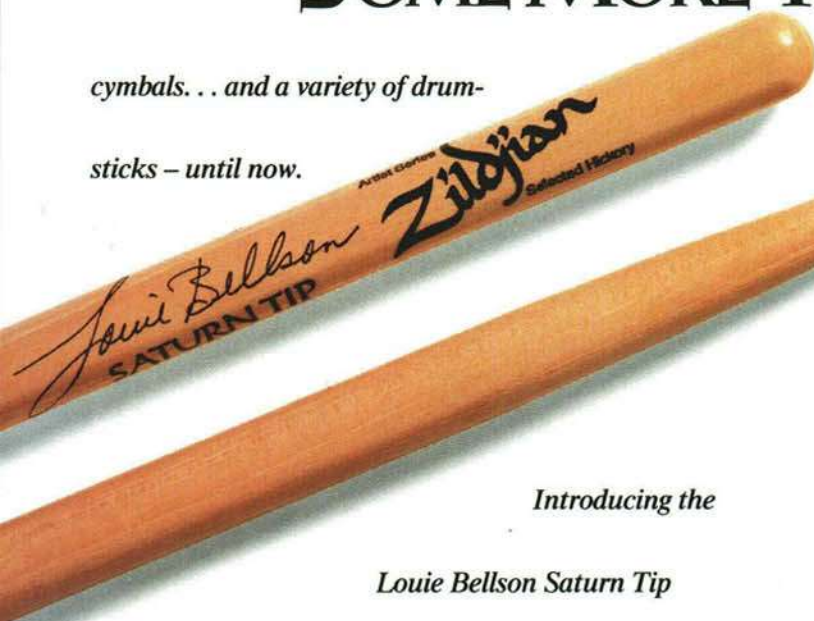
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